

LE COEUR DE CLOCHETTE

MARCH, 1905

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THE RED BOOK



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THE RED BOOK

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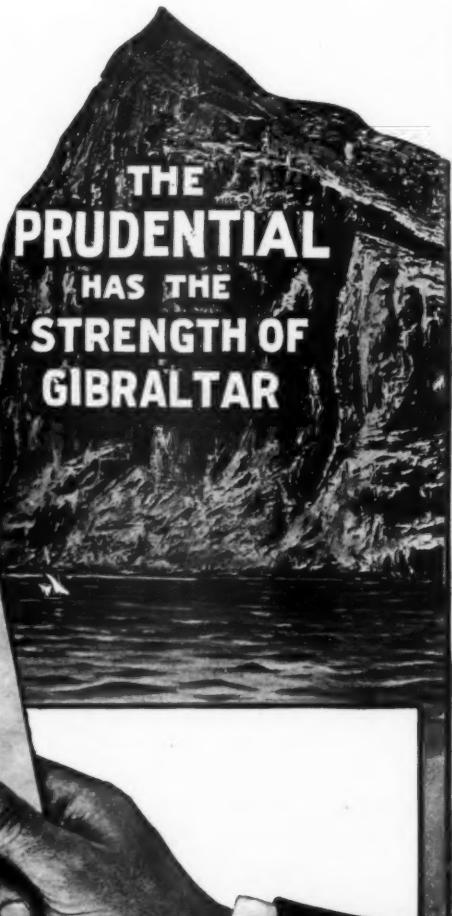
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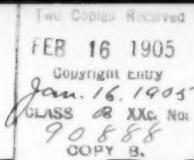
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DRAWN BY GUSTAVUS C. WIDNEY

"That is because I love you."

"The Lovers of Clochette;" see page 562



THE RED BOOK

Vol. IV

March, 1905

No. 5

The Lovers of Clochette

BY ELIZABETH STARR CHATFIELD

Clochette leaned her dimpled elbows on the window ledge and gazed across the narrow street to the window of her opposite neighbor. Nothing was to be seen there, however, save a puff of steam when the little tailor's goose was too hot for the press-cloth. But, though nothing was to be seen, delicious sounds were to be heard, for the little tailor could whistle like a song thrush, and he was doing so at this minute.

Clochette smiled, and presently she frowned, for why should the music cease so suddenly in the most entrancing passage?

"Never," said Clochette with decision, "never will I marry the tailor until I know the meaning of these sudden interruptions."

But at this moment another and quite a different melody reached her ear. She ran out of the room and across the corridor to the little turret chamber that looked down into the court of great St. Michael's. Beyond that green space towered a lofty stone building, and under the roof, high in the pointed gable, before an open window, stood a tall young man with a violin. He played as if inspired, and the color came to Clochette's cheek and she clasped her hands in delight.

"Ah," said she, "it is Gaspard! Gaspard who can play—and dance! One would think he was shod with the wings of Mercury, so swift, so light, so entrancing!"

Speaking to her thoughts only, but with her bright face upturned toward the musician, a sudden cloud seemed to envelop little Clochette. She stamped upon the floor and her brown eyes sparkled.

"It is exasperating," cried she. "It is impossible. He, too, the first violin, stops always—*pourquoi?*" For the violinist had ceased to play in the midst of an aria.

The silence was again broken, by the lively strains of martial music, and again Clochette was restored to sunshine, as she ran merrily down the corridor to a little balcony that looked out upon the public square.

"I love the soldiers," hummed Clochette.

She was just in time to receive a salute—which was entirely out of order—from the handsome Captain of the Guards. The soldiers made a fine showing this brilliant September morning, with their scarlet coats and glittering bayonets, their straight shoulders and close-cropped curls. They were a handsome lot, and the best-drilled regiment in France.

But it was not of gold lace or epaulettes that Clochette was thinking. It was of the little Sergeant Pierre that she thought, with a puzzled face and vexation of spirit. If he were only not so small! If his hair were not the color of carrots and his eyes like a gray and changing sea! Clochette knew that he was brave, that the Emperor himself had placed the cross upon his breast; she knew, too, that he was good and tender to all who loved him, and even cultivated the cabbages in his grandmother's kitchen-garden when off duty, an employment which he most devoutly hated.

As the little sergeant passed beneath her balcony, he faltered and lost his step. Clochette was in high disdain.

"Ah, my friend," said she between her



“Gaspard in his long-tailed coat.”

little white teeth, “why do you do that? Do you think I will marry a soldier who cannot keep step with his comrades?”

Clochette went to the fête that night week. She wore her gown of yellow silk, and yellow roses in her hair, and her little gold chain about her neck. She loved the dance, and her lovers were all there; the smiling little tailor with his blue eyes and his curls and his dimples and his faultless clothes; Gaspard in his old long-tailed coat, with a rose in his button-hole; and Pierre in his new lieutenant’s uniform, for he had received his promotion.

The tailor pressed her hand and put his arm around her waist and they whirled away. He could not dance very well, but he could say nice things.

“Will you tell me a secret?” whispered Clochette. “Why is it, when you whistle so deliciously, that you suddenly stop in the midst of your melody? It is very provoking.”

“Oh, that,” said the little tailor, blushing, “it is a very bad habit I have of biting off my thread. I fear I am ruining my teeth. But do *you* listen when I whistle?”

A little later Clochette had forgotten everything and everyone, for she was dancing with Gaspard. He had left the musicians’ gallery and had come down for a waltz with her, and he danced with no one else.

The roses deepened softly in Clochette’s cheeks. Her breath came quickly, and she knew if he were to ask her a question now, she should say “Yes.”

“Do you know, little one, I am going away?” whispered he. “Yes, I am going to Paris. I have been appointed to a place in the Imperial orchestra. I go to earn glory for thee, and then the poor Gaspard will no longer live in an attic, and he may aspire to this little hand that rests so kindly in his,” and yet he asked no pledge of her.

At this moment the G-string of the big viol snapped with a snur-r, and Clochette came back to her senses.

“When do you go?” she asked.

“The first week of the next month,” he answered. “Will you think of me sometimes?”

“Oh, yes, I shall often think of you,” she replied smilingly, “but I wish you would tell me one thing which I am curious to know. When you are practicing in your little chamber under the roof, why do you pause so suddenly in the midst of your melody? I have often noticed it and wondered.”

“Ah,” said Gaspard, “then you have curiosity?” and he looked at her suspiciously. “It is only to rosin my bow.”

Clochette looked in his face and did not believe him. “I am glad,” she said under her breath, “that he did not ask me that question.”

“Have you not saved one dance for me, dear Clochette?” said Pierre at the last. He had been dancing with all the ugly girls and talking to the old women.

“Oh, you,” she said with a provoking laugh. “Can *you* dance, Pierre? If you keep no better step to the viol than to the fife and drum it were as well for you not to try. You would only step on my toes and ruin my dress.”

"You are very beautiful," said Pierre, looking at the roses in her hair.

"And you are very stupid!" cried Clochette angrily. "Tell me, when you are marching with the Guards, why is it that you sometimes hesitate and lose your step? If I were your captain I would lay my sword about your shoulders."

"Ah, Clochette," whispered Pierre, "you have a tender heart for all but me. The reason I hesitate and lose my step is that I am thinking of the one I love better than I love my life. When I think of her, my heart beats too fast and there is a mist before my eyes. I try to remember the few kind words that she has spoken to me, but sometimes——"

"Let us go home," said Clochette. "I am tired of this ball."

There came a black and gloomy day late in September. The mist came up from the river and the fog came down from the mountain, and the chestnut leaves whirled drearily about the deserted square. A little beggar boy, in a long, ragged, red cloak and a cap with the visor pulled down over his brown curls, was loitering about the town.

He hesitated at the door of the little tailor, and then mounted the stair. All was neat and trim within. The tailor sat upon his bench sewing and whistling, with his legs crossed under him, and on either side sat a pretty little apprentice girl pretending to sew also, but casting long, long looks at the master.

As the beggar lad stood in the door, the tailor suddenly ceased whistling and quickly kissed the black-eyed apprentice on his right. She blushed and giggled, and the girl with the yellow curls tossed her head.

"Oh-h!" cried the beggar lad.

"Hello! whom have we here?" said the tailor. "Where did you get your Paris cloak? Come in and let us have a look at you. What do you want, eh?"

"Only *un petit sou, monsieur*," said the child, half-frightened, "for a little bread; I am so hungry."

"We will soon cure that," said the tailor. "Lift the big goose and carry it to the pressboard, and you shall have ten sous."

"That I will," said the lad, and he

tried with all his might to lift the great goose, but it was too heavy.

"Try again," said the tailor, laughing, and he kissed the girl with the yellow curls.

"No, I will not try; you are laughing at me," said the boy angrily, and he began to cry and ran out of the room.

"La, my little one, I am not so bad," cried the tailor; "take these," and he threw a handful of coppers after him.

"What an escape!" exclaimed the child, panting, as the sidewalk was reached. "Had I married that odious little man he would have ridiculed me to my face and kissed the maids behind my back."

From this narrow street the beggar had emerged upon the square. Running quickly across it, he disappeared around the corner of a great, somber church. After a few steps he arrived at the high porch of a tall apartment house. The building was shabby and old and covered with ivy, and was occupied by various poor artists. Entering the vestibule, he mounted flight after flight of stairs until he came to a low, black door directly



"Pierre in his new uniform,"



"The little tailor in his faultless clothes."

under the roof. Sounds of exquisite music came from the small chamber, and drifted out into the gloomy passage.

"Ah, we are at home," said the lad. "I am half afraid."

He knocked, but no one responded, and he ventured to lift the iron latch. Still unnoticed, he stepped into the bare, untidy room, and discovered the musician standing before his music rack, beside which was a small table whereon reposed some sheets of music and a quartern bottle. So engrossed was the musician that he did not perceive the lad, who stood fascinated by the wonderful music.

Suddenly there was a break—so abrupt, indeed, that the strings of the violin seemed to crack beneath the onset of the bow, and, throwing the instrument down, Gaspard seized the great bottle and held it to his lips, with a backward motion of his head that disclosed his long, gaunt neck, ungraced by collar or handkerchief. At this moment there was nothing attractive about the musician, and the lad shuddered. As he lowered his bottle, he became aware of the beggar boy's presence.

"Thief!" he thundered, "how came you in this room? Begone this moment!"

"Pardon, *monsieur*. It was the music. I am only a little, hungry boy. I cannot hurt you. If *monsieur* knew what it was to be hungry!"

"*Chut!* *Monsieur* knows very well what it is to be hungry, and thirsty too," said Gaspard with a grin. "Now, if you were thirsty, I could give you a drink." He turned a greasy pocket inside out. "Here are two sous. I will give you one if you will take a drink from my pretty bottle here."

"I will try," said the child, putting the flask to his lips. "Oh! how can you drink it?" he cried. "It is like fire!"

"So, you don't earn the little penny," said Gaspard brutally, returning the money to his pocket. "Very well, begone about your affairs and leave me to mine. I have to arrange my toilet presently and make my adieux to the pretty Clochette. My pretty Clochette who adores me, tra-la! Stay! How comes it that a little, brown beggar boy has such white hands?" but the lad was gone like a flash, leaving Gaspard to his reflections.

The gray clouds lifted above the mountain and the sun came out in splendor, turning the drops of mist to jewels and making the chestnut leaves look like frêts of gold. It shot in broad gleams across the velvet green turf of the square and lingered lovingly on the branches of a great lime tree. Beneath the lime tree was a circular bench upon which sat a soldier in a smart lieutenant's uniform, but neither the brightness of his buttons nor the friendliness of the sun had the power to lift the sadness from the young soldier's face.

Approaching from the opposite direction came a beggar lad in a scarlet cloak and sat down upon the other side of the tree. The soldier sighed heavily; the beggar lad sighed also.

"What was that?" said the soldier. "It was the wind in the tree."

"No," said the beggar lad, "it was not the wind in the tree; it was I."

In great astonishment the soldier peered round the bole of the tree and saw the



DRAWN BY GUSTAVUS C. WIDNEY

"The tailor quickly kissed the black-eyed apprentice."



DRAWN BY GUSTAVUS C. WIDNEY

"Clochette loved the dance."

child huddled up in a scarlet cloak, with his head upon his knees.

"My poor little one," said the soldier, "art thou, too, unhappy? What ails thee?"

"A common grievance," said the child. "I am hungry."

"Ah, but that is soon mended," said the soldier. "See, I have a little silver

and I shall have more next quarter day. I will share with thee," and he gave him half his money.

The child turned the coins over doubtfully. "It will go but a little way," said he, "when there are so many to feed."

"Ah, then, what are a few silver pieces to me?" said Pierre. "Take it all. A comrade will divide with me, or there is always the good grandmother. If it will ease thy sadness I will gladly part with it. I would that someone were happy this day!"

"If I were a soldier and wore a coat like that, I should be happy every day," said the lad.

"If you were Pierre, you would be happy upon no day," said the soldier.

"But why?" said the child. "Why art thou sad, my good friend? Art ever hungry?"

"I am sad," said Pierre, "because I cannot keep step with my comrades."

"And why cannot you keep step?" persisted the child.

"Because," said Pierre, "I think of the beautiful girl I love, who cares not *un petit sou* for me, and so I lose my heart and my step."

The beggar boy flung off his cap, and the gold-brown curls came tumbling about his face.

"O Pierre! Pierre! how stupid you are!" he cried.

"Clochette! Clochette! How beautiful you are!" cried the soldier.

"That is because I love you," said Clochette.

The Thoroughbred

BY WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE

The president of the County National Bank swung about in his chair and looked squarely at the man before him.

"Sorry, J. C.," he said, regretfully, "but the directors of the bank have turned you down. They *had* to, don't you see?"

The other man rose. He nodded indifferently. "Oh, well," he answered, "I'll get the money somehow. See if I don't."

He went back to his office in the mill. "Where's Jimmy?" he asked of his private secretary, as he dropped into a seat at his desk. They found Jimmy, and Jimmy came.

"Jimmy," said J. C., "we're up against it. I've been to every bank, every money-lender, note-shaver, throat-cutter in town—and they all say 'No.'"

An anxious, worried look crossed the face of Jimmy, which corresponded almost in each detail to the look that J. C. wore.

"We've got to have that money, Jimmy," continued J. C. "We've simply got to have it."

This was in 1893. J. C. Brooks & Son, heavy manufacturers of woolen and cotton cloths, found themselves face to face with the crisis which had confronted every business house in the United States. J. C. Brooks had made a fortune during the Civil War. J. C. Brooks & Son had prospered almost at the rate of arithmetical progression. But now—battle, murder, sudden death! Everything had gone to smash, and J. C. Brooks & Son were going, too. At another time, even in its present strait, any bank—every bank—in town would have discounted the firm's paper, even without security, mortgaged as the mill was, but *now*—these were parlous times. Men with money held their breaths and took a strong grip on their money-bags. Everything was going to the dogs.

"I thought, Jimmy," finally said J. C. to his son, "that *you* might have something to suggest."

But Jimmy shook his head. The elder

man was clearly disappointed. "Jimmy," he said, "you ought to cultivate a business head. You ought to use judgment. You ought to *think*." The young man slightly flushed.

"Well, Jimmy," went on J. C., "I'll tell you. I can't get a farthing here, in town. I'm going outside for it. I'm going up to Bellport City."

Once more Jimmy shook his head. "The banks up there," he said, "won't do any more than the banks here."

J. C. snorted. "Banks, nothing," he responded. "I'll go to Beckingham. You've heard me speak of him. He's an old schoolmate, Jimmy, and an old friend. He's easy, Jimmy, and he don't know as much about business as you do, either. I'll go to him and get the loan."

Jimmy looked at J. C. doubtfully. "You'll have to tell him," he suggested, "that we're mortgaged up to the handle."

Once more J. C. snorted. "Tell him nothing," he answered. "What we want is five thousand dollars. If we get that we can pull through. I *know* it, Jimmy. There's no need to tell him any more."

"It isn't—" began Jimmy, uncertainly.

"Isn't *what*?" roared J. C. "I don't know what it isn't, Jimmy. But I'll tell you one thing that it *is*. It's business—and that's all there is about it."

J. C. went to Bellport City, and he went to Beckingham, an aristocratic gentleman, with the blood of kings running in his veins, and with a fine disregard of riches, of which he had, as he supposed, enough for any purpose. Without a thought he sat down and wrote a check for the desired amount, and J. C. came back to his mill in Monroe with triumphant eye.

"I've got it, Jimmy," he announced, gleefully. "That's business. And," he added, "it will pull us through."

He was right; it did pull them through. And when the crisis had passed, and the battle smoke had lifted, the firm of J. C. Brooks & Son found that it was

one of the few that had survived the devastation.

Jimmy was slightly worried by the signs of adversity that he saw about him, but old J. C. kept his eye upon the future.

"It's all right, Jimmy," he said. "Most of the manufacturers we've been up against are down and out. Competition has been well-nigh destroyed. You watch. Inside of ten months we'll have more orders than we can handle. See if we don't."

Again he was right. The demand was coming to the front; the sources of supply had narrowed, and J. C. Brooks & Son derived the benefit.

The first five thousand the concern could spare went back to Beckingham, with interest at six per cent.

"Now," said J. C., "we're through with him."

But they were not. For Beckingham, aristocrat, nobleman by nature and by kin, leader of exclusive Bellport City circles, gentleman of leisure—Beckingham had not felt at the start the fury of the panic. He was removed from the arena of events, where the activity and dearth of money were most keenly felt. But his time came, later. During a period of prosperity, his securities—mortgages and stocks and bonds as they were—would have had a staple value. In the crisis they had crumpled up like dried leaves—their value had suddenly evaporated. He found it out, too late.

For a time, he said nothing. But he was a man with many wants. His social position alone demanded the expenditure of much money. The time came when, in his improvidence, he found himself without a cent.

It was fully four years after J. C. Brooks had borrowed of him the money that had tided the woolen house over the darkness of the panic, that Beckingham stepped feebly into J. C.'s office.

It was ten minutes later that J. C. tiptoed into the office of Jimmy Brooks, his son and partner.

"Beckingham's out here," he said. "You don't know him. He's an old friend of mine—an acquaintance, we may say—"

Jimmy nodded. "The man," he sug-

gested, "who lent us the five thousand?"

"Never mind that," answered J. C., "he's gone to smash. He came down here to see me, on the strength of that loan he made us. I don't know why, for we gave him better interest than he could have commanded in Bellport City—but he's here. He's here, and he wants to borrow a thousand dollars flat. What do you say? I'm going to tell him 'No.'"

Young Jimmy looked doubtfully at his father. "He—helped *us* out," he demurred.

"Jimmy, Jimmy," returned his parent, "you've got no business head. We had a business when we borrowed. We could pay back. But here's Beckingham, hasn't got a cent—he tells me so. Don't you see—admits it. He's down and out. He can't pay back. He *calls* it a loan, but if we hand him a check for a thousand—or for anything—it'll be a gift—that's all. The firm of J. C. B. & Son ain't quite a charitable organization—not just yet, Jimmy boy."

"We would have given five thousand four years ago," returned Jimmy, "just to get that five thousand that we did get. It seems to me—"

Old Brooks shook his head. "You must use your judgment, Jimmy," he said, "don't lose yourself—keep your business head."

Ten minutes later Beckingham strode dejectedly from the private office of J. C. He had asked for bread—bread that he thought he had a right to ask for; he had received nothing but a stone.

"If there's anything else," J. C. had told him, "that I can *ever* do for you, but this, I'll do it, and with pleasure. Come to me for any other thing, at any time, and I'll do anything I can. But this is impossible. We—we absolutely cannot spare the cash. Good-day."

And yet the firm of J. C. Brooks & Son was upon the topmost wave of business and financial prosperity; its tide of fortune was at the flood.

It was three years later that J. C., during the absence of his private secretary, called to the younger member of the firm.

"Jimmy," he said, "our man Thompson has struck me for a raise. He did

it six months ago, and he's been at me ever since. I don't know what he's after—he's got some more children or something. Thompson is a good man," he added, "but I don't think that we can stand the raise. He isn't worth it, seems to me. What do you think?"

James C. Brooks, Jr., a young man of twenty-eight years, strong, handsome, broad-shouldered, clear-eyed and clear-complexioned, shook his head.

"He hasn't had a raise for two years," he protested.

"Jimmy," said the old man, sternly, "think—why don't you *think*? Use your own judgment."

That was constantly the old man's cry. His son was not a disappointment to him. By no means. James C., Jr., was an able, capable business man—so far as the detail of the mill went.

"But," J. C. had told him, "what you want is executive ability. That's what you want. And you want to think for yourself—act for yourself. Now, I'll tell you, Jimmy," he would say, "there's your cousin, Stackpoole." His cousin, J. Brooks Stackpoole, was a lawyer in town, progressive and aggressive, and perhaps of the age of forty-two. "Look at him, Jimmy. He's a man with executive ability—always has been. He thinks for himself. Why, look here, Jimmy. Stackpoole's father—my cousin, he was—left, as you know, some three hundred thousand dollars. Brooks Stackpoole's mother, as you know, gets the income. Well, look at Brooks. Ever since he's been thirty-five, ever since old Brooks died, young Stackpoole has made five per cent—think of it—every year, for the old lady; and he's made money hand over fist, out of his practice, for himself. Look at him; look how he lives—he's a man, Jimmy; a business man clear up to the

handle. *He's* got business ability."

James C. Jr. nodded. "I'm not thirty-five," he answered.

But in his own heart James C. Jr. was discouraged. He did not know why. He wanted to please his father; he wanted always to think the right thing, to do the right thing. But he was a son in the



DRAWN BY F. DEFORREST SCHOOL

"I must fix this place up." See page 566

business of which his father was the head and front. Looking back upon his business career, young J. C. could not remember any time when everything was not referred to the head of the firm. Old J. C. was a wise man, a thorough business man, and it was his judgment and the judgment of no one else, that guided the woolen house through the breakers and into the channels of success. J. C. Jr. felt that.

He felt that the judgment that controlled must always be his father's judgment. He didn't realize that most of the time his judgment and his father's were coincident—that, after all, they thought largely alike. He was hampered. In any crisis, he thought to himself that he must decide not for himself; he must not use his own judgment; he must decide as he thought old J. C. would decide. If he *had* used his *own* judgment, all would have been well, for his judgment was good; but this deciding for some one else is something that no man has ever yet succeeded in doing. James C. Brooks Jr. had executive ability. But he did not know it. The one thing that he lacked—and that was the old man's fault—was self-confidence. The old man, holding everything in with a tight rein, had made J. C. Jr. afraid to judge, to act. But he *knew* the business.

Thompson, the private secretary, had been a useful man, slow-going and stupid as he was. The senior member of the firm had kept his own finger upon every business detail, and Thompson had merely fitted into a niche that seemed made for him; he had a mere mechanical duty to perform. To Jimmy, it seemed as if the old man were the brains, and Thompson and himself were merely well-oiled portions of the machinery. Jimmy did not know that he himself was a thorough business man.

"I wonder," he thought to himself, "if I'll ever be a man like Brooks Stackpole—if I'll ever have executive ability."

"Now, Jimmy," his father had concluded, with reference to Thompson, "I'm going to let Thompson slide. We're paying him too much as it is. I'm going to get a woman in his place. She'll do a heap sight better, maybe; and it'll cost the firm a heap sight less."

Even as he spoke, he fingered a letter written, apparently, in a feminine hand. It was evident that he had already secured, or was about to secure, some specific female in the place of Thompson.

Thompson went, and the woman came. Down in the mill the men heard of it.

"One of them stenographers," they told each other. "The old man's gettin' fancy in his old age." To the word stenographer, the mill folk attributed a

sex. Thompson, also, had been a stenographer, but he had been generally known as J. C.'s man, or "Andy," as the case might be.

The woman was a girl—twenty, perhaps, or twenty-one.

"A good-looker, too," asserted the foreman of the mill. He was right. She had sufficient color to make her look exceedingly well in a white shirtwaist and a black skirt—her invariable costume. She was a beginner—J. C. probably had employed her, for that reason, at a lower rate—and though she was confused and somewhat tremulous at first, she soon recovered the poise and balance that, with her, seemed innate. She had the feminine instinct of cleanliness. J. C.'s office, busy as it was, had been invariably dirty and disordered. James C. Jr. found her on the second Saturday afternoon, with her sleeves rolled up, making effective use of a dust rag. She flushed.

"I must fix this place up," she told him.

Inside of a month, she had plucked order from chaos. Good business man as J. C. had ever been, he had been so used to running things himself, used to keeping mental notes of this, that and the other matter of importance, that he had but little use for internal method. But this girl soon had a place for everything, and had everything in its place. The work told on her at first. She seemed to think that she had the whole mill upon her shoulders.

"Mr. Brooks," she would say to J. C. or to Jimmy, "you won't forget this—that—or the other thing. You made an appointment, you remember."

Gradually, old J. C. began to depend upon her; he had never depended upon Thompson; nor had he depended materially upon Jimmy. But this girl, before whose eye each detail of the business passed, seemed to insist, silently, that she must become a necessary element in the success of the concern.

One day J. C., who was getting old, rushed into his office and flung down his hat.

"My heavens!" he said, wildly, "I forgot all about it. Jimmy, Jimmy," he called. Then he went on. "There's Smith-Perkins, a house that I've been

trying for years to get—and they gave me an order last week; a rousing one. And I've clean forgot it. It is too late to fill it. My heavens—what's the matter with me? Jimmy, Jimmy!"

Jimmy came. The old man went into an ecstasy of self-objurgation about the forgotten order of Smith-Perkins.

"I've been trying to round them up for years," he complained.

"Smith-Perkins?" returned Jimmy, "why, it's all right. That order went out—the whole business—last Friday, and on time—"

"What?" yelled the old man. "How—it wasn't on the books. I took the order on the 'phone. And I forgot the whole blamed thing."

He stopped. The new stenographer stood before him. She smiled.

"I heard you repeat the order at the telephone," she said with a smile. "It was Monday last week I put it down." She opened a book. "There it is," she said.

The old man looked on. It was all there; she had it right, word for word. The details were all correct.

"By George," exclaimed the old man, to Jimmy and the girl, "I'm mighty glad that I let Thompson go and took you on. It was business to do that, Jimmy."

All that day he was congratulating himself on his sagacity. "She was a bargain," he told himself. "She's got executive ability, Jimmy," he told his son. She had; he was right; and she was getting something more—a wonderful grip on the details of this business of the firm of J. C. Brooks & Son.

One day, many months later, young Brooks, now thirty, but as fresh and young, apparently, as a lad of twenty-one, stepped into the presence of his father. There was a strange light in his eyes, an unaccustomed flush upon his face.

"I wanted to tell you," he began, his voice gathering strength as he went on, "I wanted to tell you, that—I'm going to marry Kathleen—your private secretary."

Then he gripped the back of the chair and gritted his teeth and waited developments. Old J. C. looked at him steadily

for a moment. Then he slowly nodded his head.

"Well, Jimmy," he answered mildly, and without a note of pleasure or displeasure in his voice, "well, Jimmy, it's for you to decide, not me. If you've made up your mind—all right. It's a matter of judgment. I have often wondered," he mused, "that you had not married years ago. *I married young.*"

James C. Brooks Jr. was surprised. He had expected a scene. But he did not fully understand his father. The old man knew that there are certain things in life about which people must decide for themselves. He had always held that matrimony was a matter for the two people most interested. He had seen the result of interference. He had been a marrying man, had James C. Brooks Sr. His son, too, felt within him the instincts of a marrying man.

But James C. Jr., though he might have married earlier, had not done so, for just two reasons. The first was, that he had been fearful of displeasing his father. This fear had been dispelled when he had taken Kathleen, the private secretary, into his arms, and had known that now his time had come. He knew that it was a matter for himself and Kathleen to decide. The second reason was more material. It was the money question.

J. C., ruling all things in his own way, with an iron will, had never had a business understanding with his son. In name, the concern was a partnership. Had a crisis arrived, had the son torn himself asunder and gone elsewhere, doubtless J. C. would have risen to the justice of the occasion, and have made a fair division. As it was, young Jimmy had always come to old J. C. for money.

"What do you want it for, Jimmy?" was the query, "and how much?"

There was never any trouble about getting money when he needed it, but there was no system about it. He was not under salary; there was never any division of profits. "When you want money," the old man would say, "come to me. You can have all you want."

The old man didn't see, couldn't see, that this was a false basis; that it placed

Jimmy in the position of a suppliant, holding out his hand for something that he didn't dare to call his own. It was wrong. What Jimmy needed, what he ought to have had, was his regular stipend, however small—his earnings—his income.

Jimmy had wondered, vaguely, what would happen when he married; how he could live—support a wife, and family. The old man never wondered. Jimmy would come to him afterwards just as before—when he needed money. It would be all right.

Well, Jimmy married. Kathleen, the private secretary, left the mill. The old man, who was fond of making the biggest show that he could, bought for Jimmy a big house near the capitol building—Monroe was the capital town in the commonwealth. He set up for Jimmy a horse and carriage, a big, showy horse that did the work of two—and a liveried coachman.

"Now, Jimmy," he said, "start in; there's plenty of society; start in, and enjoy yourself. Come to me for money—when you need it."

Jimmy started in. But there was one thing that old J. C. had left out of his calculations. The whole town knew that Jimmy Brooks had married his father's stenographer. There was one thing that old J. C.'s money wouldn't do—it wouldn't buy a place in the social circles of Monroe for a typewriter, even though she were the wife of Jimmy Brooks. Jimmy, knowing what he did about his wife, loving her as he did, didn't care so much. Jimmy's wife didn't care at all, it seemed. But old J. C. stood aghast.

"You want to spend more money, Jimmy," he insisted. "You don't spend enough—you want to make a show." Jimmy, obeying his father's mandate, drew liberal installments from the safe; he and his young wife lived well; and the first act of justice that Jimmy did was to make his wife, out of the money that he got, a very liberal allowance. But all this didn't get them into the real society of the place, as J. C. had hoped it would.

"You've been in all your life, Jimmy," he said, "you ought to be in now. Get Stackpoole. He's got executive ability. He's at the head of the heap. He's one

of the biggest toads in the social puddle. He'll push you in."

But Jimmy and his wife didn't want to be pushed; they didn't care about it; and while Jimmy really liked his cousin Stackpoole, young Mrs. Jimmy didn't like him at all.

"Don't bring him here again, Jimmy," she told him, "if you can help it. There's something about him that I don't like."

She knew what it was, though she did not tell Jimmy. Stackpoole had presumed upon her lowly origin. "They're all alike," he told himself; and he had attempted to make himself agreeable, too agreeable, to Jimmy's wife.

They didn't go into society. Behind them was J. C., puzzled over it.

"Can't understand it," he told himself. "You're all right, Jimmy, and Kathleen, she—why, thunder, she's all right. I guess," he added, "that you're not a pusher, Jimmy."

Jimmy smiled. "We're happy as we are," he said.

J. C., head of the firm of J. C. Brooks & Son, one day turned his face to the wall, and died. It was two years after Jimmy's marriage. His illness had been a lingering one. His death had occurred while Jimmy was still in the valley of indecision; while he was still uncertain as to his own business ability; still in ignorance as to his own business strength.

"Jimmy," his father had told him, in his last illness, "I want to tell you something. I want to see you get along. You're all right, Jimmy, but you haven't got just enough executive ability. There's one man that has—he's good. It's Stackpoole. You know the business, maybe. Stackpoole is a lawyer, and he doesn't. But he's a good adviser; he's got executive ability and business judgment. Take his advice. He's sound; he's good; he's up to date. He's a man to tie to, Jimmy. Take his advice."

Jimmy believed that his father was right. When his father died he felt as if his backbone—his business life-blood—were gone.

"What shall I do?" he asked himself.

His young wife had touched him upon the arm. "Jimmy," she said, "there isn't



DRAWN BY F. DEFOREST SCHOOK

“‘What is this?’ she inquired.” See page 570

much to do. I know. The mill will almost run itself. It's merely buying and selling and making. That's all. You can keep your customers. It isn't hard. Don't you see?"

But Jimmy shook his head. His father had known his son's limitation; his son felt it. His father had been right. The son knew the business, knew the detail, but he didn't know *how*. And he turned to Stackpoole in his fancied need. Stackpoole welcomed him with open arms. Jimmy felt safe—safe.

Stackpoole came to him one day and shut the door. "Jimmy," he said, with the air of one who knew and who could not be mistaken, "I've been studying this thing, and I've about made up my mind. Of course, you, here, with your nose to the grindstone, can't see this thing as I see it. But I'll tell you what you want—what you need—what the old man would have had, if he'd lived until now. You're all right, but you're not just up to date. You want new machinery. You want a modern building for it. It'll cost money, but it's good business; it's up to date; you've got to compete; and to compete, you've got to keep up with the march of modern times."

Jimmy told his wife about it. "It will cost forty thousand dollars," he told her, "but Stackpoole says we need it. I think we need it too."

She puckered up her brow. "How do you need it, Jimmy?" she protested, "why do you need it? I know something about it, too. More than Brooks Stackpoole does. Your mill is running at a good profit now; you have a good, safe business, Jimmy, and your customers are all old stand-bys. You turn out your work on time, and always have—ahead of time, in fact. I don't see *why* you need it."

"Brooks Stackpoole says we do," answered Jimmy. "He knows."

"But—but," she protested, "you haven't got it—you haven't got the money; not in cash."

She was right. Old Brooks had not left so much after all. He had been successful, and his income had been large; but his mill property and the good will of his business had been the bulk of his estate. It was enough for any man.

"Stackpoole," responded Jimmy, "will loan it to us. He's got it, and he'll let me have it. I must take his advice."

Still did Mrs. Jimmy shake her head. "I don't like it, Jimmy," she told him, "it doesn't seem right."

One day Jimmy and Brooks Stackpoole stepped into her presence. They had some papers. Stackpoole made obeisance.

"I'm going to loan the mill," he said, "some thirty-five thousand dollars or so. I'm taking a risk in doing it; but I want to do what's right by James."

He thrust some papers underneath her nose. "Sign opposite the seals," he said. She started.

"What—what is this?" she inquired. Stackpoole smiled. "It's a mortgage on the mill," he answered.

"But," she responded, "there's more than one."

He nodded. "It's the bond," he returned.

"There are *four*," she persisted. Stackpoole was annoyed. He turned to Jimmy. "The women always stand in the way," he said.

"Two of those," he told her, "are the bond and mortgage on the mill. The other two are the bond and mortgage on the—house."

"The house," she gasped, "*this* house?"

Stackpoole nodded shortly. "Jimmy," she exclaimed, "I don't like this. I've seen too much—of mortgages on—houses."

Stackpoole snorted. "Your house has got a mortgage on it already," he responded. It had. Jimmy's father had merely bought an equity—he wanted to make a show; it was his way.

"I know that," answered Jimmy's wife, "but James can pay that off with the earnings of the mill within two years. I don't see why you need a second mortgage on the house."

Stackpoole swung about angrily. He was at a disadvantage in the presence of this woman. He had not forgotten, nor had she, the last time that he was in her presence.

"Look here," he exclaimed, "I'm trying to do my best for James. What do I care? I'm trying to help him."

James," he said, "if you don't want this thing to go through, say the word. I'll back out with pleasure. I want to deal with men, not women."

After all, Jimmy was a man; he had strength of character. He told his wife that this thing must go through. Reluctantly she assented.

"I want to read these papers," she said. Suddenly she started. "Why," she gasped, "these mortgages are to the bank, not to you—they're made out to the bank!"

Stackpoole flushed. "It's all the same," he said to Jimmy. "I wanted to save you the trouble of the details. I'm getting this money from the bank. I've got the money, but it's tied up. I'm endorsing your paper, and the bank is putting up the money on my signature, yours and the two mortgages. That's all. It's just a manipulation of the details. They're doing it on my account."

The deal went through—against the better judgment of young Mrs. Jimmy Brooks. The bank loaned the money, and Stackpoole took charge of the new improvements. Jimmy had his doubts from time to time, but when he saw the new, fancy machinery that was to make their woolen mill over into a very modern concern, his heart was glad. The new improvements and adjustments on the cams, the knives, the needles—it did his heart good to start up the machinery and run it all himself. He was a woolen man clear through, was Jimmy Brooks.

He was satisfied. He had left the expenditure of money largely to Stackpoole, and Stackpoole seemed to have spent it well and wisely.

Things went on smoothly. The mill was prospering—times were good. Business was increasing, slowly, but surely.

"But," insisted Jimmy's wife, "you could have done just as well without the money. Now, Jimmy, you're in debt. Before you were not. And I know that your new improvements have not brought you one new customer. What difference has it made? None. There's not a customer of yours who knows that you have the new improvements; and there's not an order that you get that you couldn't fill completely in the old way, upon time."

Jimmy shook his head. "I'm in debt," he answered, "but business is good, and I'm paying off those mortgages out of the profits at the rate of seventy-five hundred dollars a year. It'll be all right, little girl."

It seemed to be all right. Jimmy was just as eager as was his wife to get out of debt, and both he and she skimped and scraped at home, in order to lessen the encumbrance steadily and regularly.

But at the end of three years, something happened. Jimmy heard from the bank. They sent him a letter, stating that the mortgages were due, and they wanted to call in the money.

"Interest has been paid us to the last interest day," they said. "The exact amount due us is thirty-five thousand, one hundred and twenty-two dollars. For this sum, kindly send us check."

Jimmy gasped. He sprang to the telephone and called up the bank.

"You've made a mistake," he told them, "there's a balance of less than half that sum," he said. They went to their books and returned to the telephone.

"We've had no payments on account," they told him. "The whole amount is due."

He went back home. Somehow, he wanted to tell his wife about it first. He didn't want to see Stackpoole just then. Once home, however, he did as Mrs. Jimmy told him. He 'phoned for Stackpoole.

"Where are you?" inquired Stackpoole.

"Home," replied Jimmy.

"I'll see you at your office," answered Stackpoole, "in fifteen minutes."

"See me here," replied Jimmy Brooks. Stackpoole came. There was no alternative. "What's up?" he queried.

"I've been paying you," answered Brooks Jr., solemnly, "seventy-five hundred a year in installments out of the earnings of the mill, to help liquidate the mortgage to the bank. You've never paid it to them."

Stackpoole was never even fazed. "You've been paying me seventy-five hundred a year," he repeated, "for—what?"

"On account of the indebtedness," returned Jimmy.

Stackpoole laughed. "Lord, where

have you been, man, all these years? Why, it was my salary you paid me—”

“What?” gasped Jimmy and his wife together.

“Salary,” answered Stackpoole. “Of course you paid it to me. You know you did. I was worth it. I’ve built your old mill up from an old slow-going concern into something new. I’ve spent a good part of my time for you—me, a twenty-five thousand a year lawyer. I’ve worked out your salvation night and day. Paid me! Of course you paid me. It was little enough, too. And *now* what do you say it was for?”

Jimmy Brooks answered. His young wife said nothing; she was watching the two men with white, shocked face.

“Lord,” answered Stackpoole, “you’re just like your father, James. He was that kind, too. He’d do you at every turn—he’d go back on every word he said—”

“But,” persisted Jimmy, “I never told you—”

“Never told me!” answered Stackpoole, rising, “then how in thunder did you think that I’d be paid? I drew this money as salary. I’ve been the head and front of your concern and you didn’t know it—eh? You knew well enough. It’s a nice time, now, to kick. Of course you knew. Why, you never asked me for a bill, even for my services as counsel. Did you think that I’d be paid on wind?”

James C. Brooks Jr. spent no further time in parley. He looked Stackpoole steadily in the eye. Stackpoole flinched.

“You can go, Stackpoole,” said Jimmy Brooks, his face gone white with anger. “You can go. You’d better not seek me again—alone. I know, now, what my father did not know. I understand.”

Jimmy Brooks had become, suddenly, a man who *knew* that he was a man. But the knowledge came too late.

The bank insisted on calling in the mortgage. Jimmy thought that he could raise the money. But he found that he was mistaken. The new improvements and the new wing ought to have been worth the face of the two mortgages, but Jimmy found that he had been swindled. Stackpoole had spent the moneys wisely, for himself, but not too well for Jimmy.

Stackpoole had done him. He knew that.

“But for my father,” he told his young wife, “I’d never have gone to Stackpoole. He never went to him on business. I wonder why he sent me to him.”

“Jimmy,” answered his young wife, “the trouble lay with your old father. He never knew you, Jimmy.”

Jimmy suddenly gasped. It was true. She had opened before him the vista of the past, and he knew—knew, now, that he had always been a man; a thing that he had never known before.

Jimmy found himself face to face with a situation which was unique. Business was good—he had all he could do to fill orders; prosperity had stretched forth to him her hand. The mill, as a mill, was in a flourishing condition.

But he was face to face with a debt of nearly forty thousand dollars—a debt that held his mill and his house within a vise. It was too much. There had been a slump in real estate in Monroe, and every man is afraid of a mill property; it is unmarketable. The bank refused to renew the mortgages; and he could not borrow the sum he needed elsewhere.

“Foreclose the mill mortgage first,” he asked the bank. They were reasonable, and did it. At the sale, they bid it in at fifteen thousand dollars. It was worth forty-five or fifty—to the right man. Jimmy had run the mill up to the last day; up to the last day he had done a rushing business. On the last day, and in his absence, his young wife stole down there, and sent up to her home the books of the concern. Jimmy, in his discouragement, had overlooked them. She wanted them; it was all that had been left of the mill.

The bank foreclosed the mortgage on the house. It did it with but little interest—it was stuck, anyway, was the bank. “There’s nothing but a worthless equity,” said the bank. “We can’t get anything out of that house. We’ll have to buy it in.”

James C. Brooks Jr. looked on aghast. It had suddenly smitten him with full force—they were taking away his home—it was the first time that he had been without money. Somehow, he felt, the

old man had not brought him up just right. He felt that all this was not altogether his own fault.

"What shall we do?" he asked of Mrs. Jimmy.

"We'll attend the sale," she had returned.

They attended the sale. The house was worth possibly some fifteen thousand dollars—as properties were going in Monroe. There was a mortgage upon it of eight thousand. It was a good house, near the State House. But who wanted it?

"It's too big," a man remarked, "I wouldn't give a thousand dollars for the equity."

But that man bid just that sum. The bank raised him a hundred. He bid a hundred more. Suddenly, Mrs. Jimmy Brooks began to bid. Her face was pale and drawn with the trouble that was on them.

Jimmy touched her on the arm. "What are you doing?" he inquired. "Don't be—foolish."

She nodded. "Fifteen hundred and fifty," she responded to the auctioneer's glance. The bank bid sixteen hundred over and above the first mortgage.

"Sixteen-fifty," answered Mrs. Brooks.

"Seventeen," said the bank. "He sprang to the telephone and called up the bank."

"Seventeen-fifty." It was Mrs. Brooks' offer. Then the bank men put their heads together. "What's the use," they said to each other, "of our loading ourselves up with this property? We can't do anything with it. It'll be an elephant on our hands. We'll let her go, and stick Stackpoole for the rest. He's on the paper." They turned back.

"Eighteen hundred," they said finally. There was a pause.

"Eighteen hundred and twenty-five,"

answered young Mrs. Brooks, in quick, tense tones. The auctioneer looked in vain at the bank men.

"Twenty-five," he droned, "twenty-five I'm offered, twenty-five, who'll make it fifty? Twenty-fi'; make it fifty; twenty-fi'; twenty-fi'; twenty-fi'—" He paused. He raised his hammer in the air.

"Twenty-five once," he exclaimed, "twenty-five twice," he went on. Mrs. Brooks did not draw a breath until his hammer had fallen with a crash, and she



DRAWN BY F. DEFORREST SCHOOL

had heard his final words—"Going—going—GONE." She stepped up to the desk and paid her deposit. Then she turned to Jimmy. "Come on," she said, "we're going home."

"Are you—crazy?" he asked of her, "what did you do that for? You can't pay that sum."

When she reached home, she turned and kissed him. "Jimmy—Jimmy," she said, "you've got to forgive me. All the time when we had so much to spend—when you were giving me—so much; all that time, much as I loved you, I was thinking just what old J. C. thought. I didn't know—I didn't understand you. I was afraid, Jimmy. I saved. I put away. I had no right, perhaps, to do it, but I did it." She laughed nervously. "I have just one dollar and thirty-three cents, Jimmy," she said, "just—"

"What?" he gasped, "is that all?"

"More," she went on, "more than the bid I made this afternoon."

"Jimmy," she added, "it's the home—we've saved the home."

Jimmy bent over her and kissed her. "By George, Kathleen, girl," he exclaimed, "you—you're a thoroughbred and no mistake."

It was true. They had a home—a home with sixteen rooms. They had little else. The mill was gone—the business with it. And out in the world, another slump was coming on; a presidential year.

Jimmy and his wife put their heads together. "What shall we do?" they said.

Jimmy's wife was ready to do anything; she would go out and earn a living. Jimmy wouldn't stand for it, of course; and she would not, either, when she came to think it over. So Jimmy started out alone to get a job. He found that it was not quite so easy as it seemed. For a month they lived on comparatively nothing at all. At the end of that time, Jimmy came home one day with radiant face.

"Kathleen," he said, "I've got a job—at the dress goods counter of Spurr & Dalrymple's store. What do you think of that?"

His wife flushed. At any other time she would have shaken her head. But now—

"How much, Jimmy?" she inquired.

"Ten a week," he answered with a laugh. She responded with a laugh.

"Jimmy," she said, "you have got grit."

Jimmy worked away, selling to people of his social status goods that he had manufactured in his mill—but selling to them by the yard. He didn't mind so much. It meant meat and drink to Kathleen and to him.

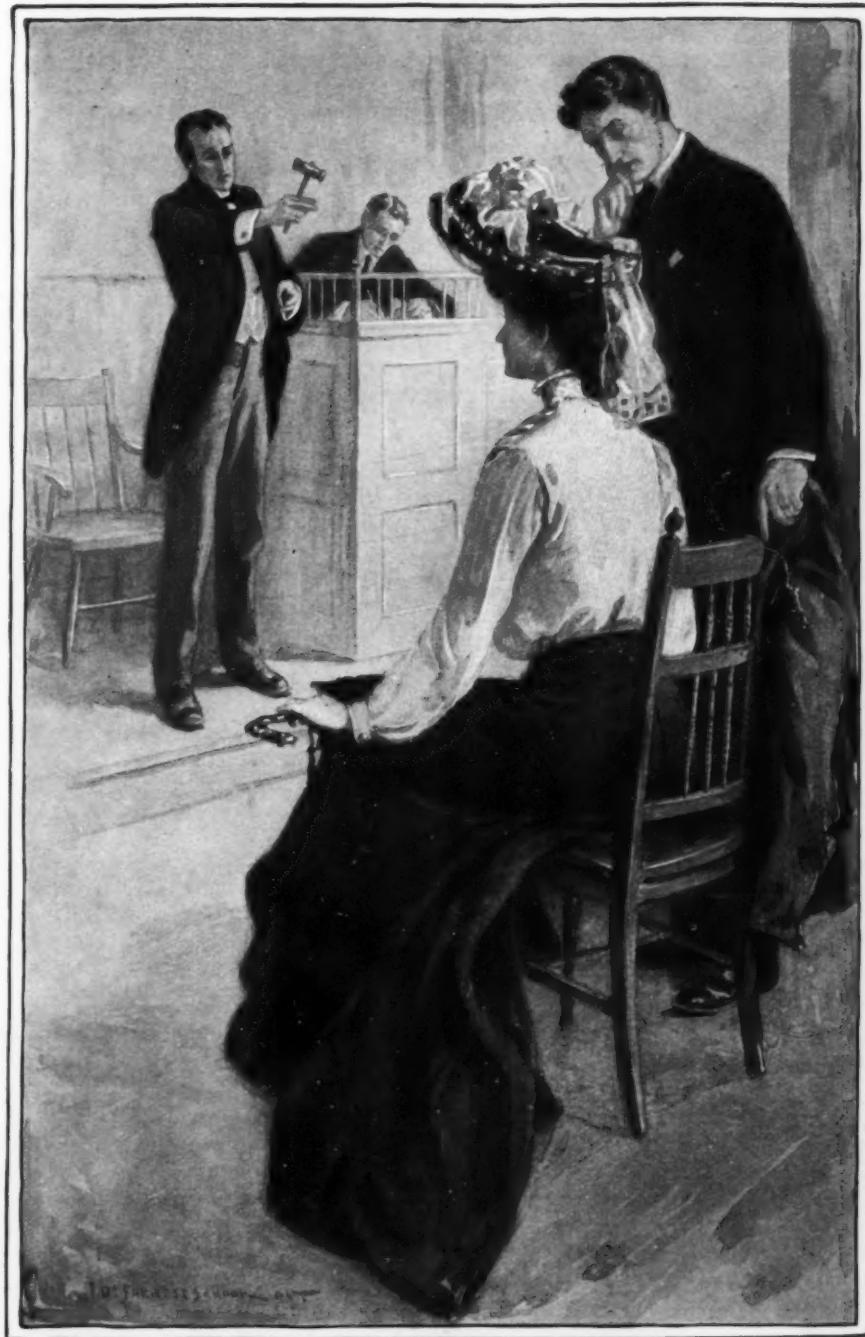
"It just shows," people said, "young Brooks didn't amount to anything—why did he marry that girl? The good in the family died with the old man, that's clear."

One day Jimmy rushed in upon his wife. "Kathleen," he gasped, "I've got to tell you—about Stackpoole. You know he's given me the cold shoulder ever since I went to the dogs; he's passed me on the street. So did other people. I didn't care so much. But now, look here—"

He pointed to the front page of the evening paper. Across it ran a headline—"STACKPOOLE"—Stackpoole's father had left a fortune of \$300,000, in which Stackpoole's mother had had an interest for life. She had died, leaving Stackpoole and four other children. The four other children had held out their hands for their share of the old gentleman's estate—there was no share; there was no estate. All these years Stackpoole had been paying his mother the interest; he had been spending the principal. He was a defaulter—an embezzler—a thief. What of it? He had swindled his relatives, and he walks the streets to-day, a free man; one of the many of his kind. Old J. C. had called him a progressive, aggressive lawyer. Old J. C. did not know that Stackpoole had never had but two clients of moment—one of them the estate of his father; one of them was James C. Brooks Jr. And his fees had been monumental, after all. He was too progressive.

Jimmy was satisfied. "He was held up to me as a pattern," he told his wife. "I'd rather be the beggar that I am."

Mrs. Jimmy had a surprise for her husband. They had been living in two rooms of their big house. One day he found himself and Mrs. J. C. Jr. rele-



DRAWN BY F. DEFOREST SCHOOK

"Twenty-five once, twenty-five twice,' he went on."

gated to the top floor of the house, and found the other rooms all ship-shaped into wonderful order. Mrs. Jimmy took him into the second floor front. There sat a grave-looking old lady, glancing expectantly at them.

"My husband, Mrs. Hargreaves," explained Mrs. Jimmy. Jimmy was puzzled. He had never heard of Mrs. Hargreaves.

"Who is she, anyway?" he asked later.

Mrs. Jimmy shrugged her shoulders. "Only one of the lodgers, Jimmy," she explained.

"One of the lodgers?" demanded J. C. Jr.

She nodded. "The first one," she returned.

Mrs. Jimmy may have been a domestic woman, but she was a first-class business woman too. She knew that while there was no chance to rent the house in which they lived, just at the present moment, there was still, within a capital town, a huge demand for lodging. Senators and assemblymen, clerks and secretaries and their wives came down for six months, and went away. They needed homes—they didn't want hotels. What they wanted, Mrs. Jimmy could supply—just the thing.

"Where in thunder shall we go?" legislators would say to their wives, or to each other. The custodian of the State House would nod his head.

"There's Mrs. J. C. Brooks, up the street," he would suggest, "try that."

And it meant that little Mrs. Brooks was earning, with her vacant space, a thousand dollars a year to Jimmy's small five hundred. It was enough, and they were happy.

"Let's go into society on it," Jimmy would say, banteringly.

"We don't have to," she would reply, "we've got society right here in the house." They had, most of the time. The representative men—and their ladies—of the better class, go far to making up the society of a capital town in any state, and Mrs. Jimmy, understanding the demand, kept her prices well up to the mark. And she was glad to note, besides, that the price of real estate was advancing slowly, but surely, in Monroe.

One day Jimmy came home to her with a frown upon his face. "That concern that runs our mill," he told her, "the new company—is making a mistake. Spurr & Dalrymple buy direct from them in small lots, and I handle the stuff. They're not keeping it up to the mark. It gets poorer and poorer every day. I hate to see it. Spurr & Dalrymple have shut down on them—I don't blame them, either. Kathleen," he went on, with a wild yearning within him, "I want to go back—I want to go back, to run the old mill. I know how. I knew before. But now I know that I know. I wish I could go back and—run the old mill."

It was the impossible. He knew it, and she knew it. But the desire was there.

One day an old German in Monroe—a householder who for years had watched Monroe property—woke up to a surprising fact. He had had his eye upon the Brooks property for years; he had attended the foreclosure sale; he was the man who bid a thousand dollars on it, and who would give no more. But he had passed it and repassed it in his peregrinations, and he had seen the use to which it was put by Mrs. Jimmy Brooks. He made some inquiry, and did some figuring.

"Good heaven!" he told himself, when he got through, "there's not a house on West End avenue that will rent for more than seven hundred and fifty—old-fashioned place that this town is; and yet this woman is getting twelve-seventy-five a year if she gets a cent. Lord, it's a gold mine! And with a thousand dollars spent on it—why, she could command 'most any price."

From that time on he kept a wistful eye upon it. But he made a mistake—he waited. Prosperous times were coming back, and West End avenue property was going up with a bound. Mrs. Brooks' house was going with it.

One day Mrs. Jimmy pinched her husband on the arm and led him into the privacy of the upper room.

"Whom do you think," she demanded, "we've got down on the second floor?—in the whole suite? Whom, for instance?"

Jimmy shook his head. "The Governor," she said, "the new Governor."

They've rented the Bailey house, and it won't, it can't be ready for at least two months. They've come to us—the only place of its kind in town. What do you think of that?"

She laughed. "Maybe," she suggested, "the Governor might be induced to give you a State House job."

Jimmy shook his head. "I want to—run the mill," he said.

Down-town, the old German, the bargain-hunter, was nodding his head. "With an addition out back," he was saying to himself. He rang the Brooks' doorbell one day, introduced himself and made known his errand.

"Thirteen thousand dollars," he said finally. Mrs. Brooks smiled, and shook her head. He left. "She'll sell for thirteen-five," he told himself. But he was mistaken. She would not.

"It's our living, Jimmy," she told her husband, "and now that Mrs. Governor Billings has come to town, it's a pleasure for me, too."

The Governor's term was three years. At the end of the first eighteen months, he whispered to his wife—the Governor did:

"I'm to be reelected," he told her. "Fanning and Moore have assured me, just to-day."

"That being the case," returned Mrs. Governor Billings, "we'd better settle down."

They tried to settle down, in the Bailey house, where they had made their home. But the Governor's wife and the Governor himself constituted a social influence that made itself felt all over the state. The Governor was affluent and he entertained as few Governors know how, or have the means to, entertain. The Bailey house was well enough for a couple of years; but for six—it wouldn't do. He and his wife sought another. There were no large ones for rent—they felt that they must buy, if they could. And the only available residence was that of Mrs. Brooks.

He went to Mrs. Brooks, and Mrs. Brooks smiled. "It's our living, Governor," she told him, "we'll have to ask our price."

"Ask it," he requested.

She complied—her price was twenty thousand dollars. The house would have brought, at private sale, perhaps seventeen-five. But to her it was worth twenty, and to the Governor.

He went back to Mrs. Billings. Then he 'phoned to Mrs. Brooks.

"We'll take it—at your price," he told her.

When Jimmy heard about it, he sat down—for all night—and wrote letters by the score.

"I want to run the mill," he kept saying to himself. "I can run the mill. I know."

They sold the house to Governor Billings. It netted them twelve thousand over and above the first mortgage.

"Hands off," said Mrs. Brooks, gaily, to Brooks, "until I'm through."

She bought a house—a little bit of a house, for herself and for Jimmy.

"It's free and clear, Jimmy," she told him. "It's a home, even if it didn't cost so much."

"You can have the rest, Jimmy," she said finally, "to do with as you please. For Jimmy is a man, a real man," she whispered to herself.

The nine thousand dollars that were left were insufficient to buy the mill, even though the new concern was sick of it; they hadn't known how to run it. Jimmy had watched them. And Jimmy marched around from pillar to post in Monroe, trying to get a loan. No one would trust him. He had failed—signally—as the successor of his father. He couldn't make them see, these people of Monroe.

"Oh," they would say, "Jimmy Brooks—steer clear of him. He was the man that ruined Stackpole. Watch out."

In the midst of it, Mrs. Brooks thought of the Governor. She had good reason to.

"Try him, Jimmy," she told her husband. "Verily a prophet is not without honor save in his own country."

He tried the Governor—a man of wealth—and told his story. His wife told the Governor's wife the story.

The Governor was no fool. "Brooks," he said, "show me your books. Let me see the business that you did when you went to smash."

The books! Brooks gasped. "Thun-

der!" he exclaimed, "I never thought of them. I guess they went with the rest. I was discouraged—don't you see? I don't know where they are."

But Mrs. Brooks did—she had them; she had possibly foreseen such a thing as this.

"You're a thoroughbred," exclaimed her husband for the second time.

The Governor took the time to verify by these records the statements of J. C. Brooks Jr. He found that the books told the same story as the story told by Jimmy and his wife.

"I'll make the loan," he said. "Buy up the mill and give me a first mortgage, and say nothing more about it. It's a go. And good luck to you, at that."

Jimmy went back and told his wife, a new light shining in his eyes.

"I can run that mill," he told her. "I've written every customer I ever had—they promise me support. It'll be a long pull and a strong pull and a pull all together, but I know that I can run that mill."

Mrs. Jimmy gazed long and earnestly at her husband's face. Finally a glad-some sigh escaped her. "I know you can, too, Jimmy boy," she said. And she was right. Jimmy did run it, runs it yet, and runs it well.

At the next inaugural ball, little Mrs. Brooks was much in evidence; and this, though Jimmy and she were living in a six-room house, and though Jimmy was still struggling mightily with a mill that he knew he could master. At the informal but exclusive reception that followed at the home of Mrs. Governor Billings, the first lady in the state did not receive alone—she was assisted by none other than young Mrs. James C. Brooks.

"Why—why," gasped Jimmy, waking one morning to find his young wife famous, "we're back again—into Society, with a capital S; to be sure."

The woman in Mrs. Jimmy came to the front. "It's so good, Jimmy," she said, "to be—back again."

Mrs. Governor Billings' intimates buzzed Mrs. Governor Billings from time to time. They were trying to find out just why the supreme honor had been extended to young Mrs. Brooks.

"Dear me," said the Governor's lady,

"where have you people of Monroe been all these years? Young Mrs. Brooks—why, *you* know who she is—"

Somebody indicated that she had been stenographer to old J. C. "Oh, of course," replied the wife of the executive, "but she's something else. She's the only daughter of Lorimer Beckingham of Bellport City." She laughed. "She has the blood of William the Conqueror running in her veins."

The name of William the Conqueror did not have much weight, but the name of Beckingham did.

"Lorimer Beckingham of Bellport City!" echoed Monroe Society. "Why—why, he was the most exclusive man in the whole state—the leader—of—society. Why—"

"Exactly," returned Mrs. Governor Billings. She was right. The wife of Jimmy Brooks was the daughter of the man who had helped J. C. in his hour of need; who, later, had been turned away by old J. C.

"If there's anything else," J. C. had told him, "that I can do—"

Well, there had been something else that he could do. And when Beckingham had died, Beckingham's daughter was face to face with starvation, and she had learned what most she needed, and had come down to old J. C. Brooks—she was his bargain. But she had the blood of kings running in her veins; the blood of men who, in more recent times, had been leaders, masters of men.

"Why—why," gasped Society, sitting down and writing out an extra pair of invitations, "why—why—Lorimer Beckingham's daughter! We never knew it. She—she's a thoroughbred. And we—never knew."

"I don't care who her father was," Mrs. Billings told the Governor, "she's proved herself a thoroughbred."

Jimmy, who had known all along who his wife was, and what she had been, nodded reflectively, and reminiscently.

"You *are* a thoroughbred, Kathleen," he explained.

"Jimmy," she answered, putting her arms about his neck, "you are a dear."

"I know how to run a mill," answered Jimmy Brooks.

The Rebellion of Geraldine

BY E. F. STEARNS

The two or three benevolent, downward-straying wisps of yellow hair were laboring in vain, for they strove to hide the frown upon the brow of Geraldine, and the frown was an ostentatious thing, born of deep disgust and open revolt.

"Stare, Ellie, stare!" Geraldine remarked, explosively. "Your sentiments, I fancy, are much the same as my own. You hardly expected to return to town and find us living in a *flat*, did you?"

"Flat!" Eleanor's laugh tinkled amusement. "You don't call a four-thousand-dollar apartment in the 'Fenelon' a flat?"

"Of course it's a flat—what else? And at the very top of the place—the *ninth* story in the air!"

"But, my dear child, there are elevators galore, aren't there? And this drawing-room is a perfect little dream!"

"Which is all very pretty, Ellie, if one enjoys that sort of dream. I don't. I abhor the beastly place."

"Gerry, Gerry, you're a spoiled young one!" Eleanor shook her head.

"I'm not—or I am, if hating flats signifies being spoiled. Good gracious, Ellie! Don't take off your things. You'll freeze to death! There hasn't been a particle of steam here to-day."

Eleanor laughed outright.

"Gerry Baird! What under the sun would you do with steam on such a day? Why, it's positively hot outdoors!"

"Possibly, for any one who tears around as you do," Geraldine responded acidly. "I'm cold all through. Jeanette, give me a shawl, or something. Well, that fur jacket will do, then. Brrr!"

And from the depths of the chinchilla collar the mournful voice pursued:

"Sit down, Ellie. I suppose you're wondering how it all happened—what brought us to this."

"I am, indeed. You didn't write."

"Didn't have the heart. Well—in the first place, the house is sold!"

"Sold!"

"Sold, my dear. To Hinken, the hide and tallow man. Ugh!"

"But whatever possessed Mr. Baird—"

"Daddy wasn't to blame—not altogether. He was half-owner with Aunt Louise. Aunt Lou defected and dad couldn't keep up the place alone. So much for being poor."

This last was a painful truth. Apart from the returns of his Wall Street place, Mr. Baird's private income could not have exceeded twenty-five thousand dollars annually. Such grinding poverty is bitter and hard to bear.

Eleanor's eye lit up with wondering interest.

"And what has become of Mrs. Cartwright, Gerry?"

"Auntie's gone away forever—London. As she sees it, America is no longer fit for human habitation. Why not? Oh, the same old story of Auntie Lou and the insecure securities."

"She—she hasn't been dabbling again?"

"Hardly—she wallowed, this time. 'Compressed Gas, preferred,' I think it was. She never mentioned it to dad until—well, until the gas had exploded and blown away something like half a million of her dollars!"

"Geraldine!"

"It's the sober truth, Ellie. I think if she'd stayed dad would have had a commission appointed to manage Auntie—but she didn't stay. She's gone, and we're here."

Eleanor had not quite finished shaking her amazed little head.

"But it's awfully convenient here, Gerry. There are only two of you, and the old house was such a big place."

"So father said. Oh, yes—it's perfectly exquisite being here. Paine came with us under protest. He wanders around and answers the door and sets things on the table—there's a kitchen somewhere downstairs—with the expression of an early Christian martyr. I don't blame him."

"But now that Mrs. Cartwright is gone, who's looking after you?"

"Nobody! I'm attending to myself,

thank you!" Geraldine thawed to a wicked smile. "Originally, it was dad's idea to have nice, sour old Aunt Kathleen live with us and take me around to places—but she was downright obliging for once."

"Well?"

"Fell downstairs last week and broke a limb!" the young lady announced, happily.

"Well—Gerry, dear! That's not funny."

"Not from your standpoint, perhaps. But—oh, decency, self-respect, any other kind of respect—I've lost them all. I'm glad she did it!"

"She'll recover."

"Later on, I suppose. But by that time—I may have daddy in a frame of mind to move, or any old thing may happen to get us out of here."

"You absurd little mortal! It's splendid. Why don't you come to your senses and enjoy it?"

"Enjoy this elevated iceberg? No!"

Eleanor laughed hopelessly and gazed across Riverside and the Hudson in silent appreciation of the outlook.

"Going to Jessie's dinner?" she inquired presently.

"Alone?"

"I forgot. We'll stop for you."

"Thank you, I think I prefer to remain at home and make the evening warm for daddy on the flat question. He can't escape—it's all on the one floor."

"Nonsense. You're expected."

"Why, pray?"

"There's somebody or other Norman wants you to meet—or who wants to meet you. Mr.—Mr.—I don't recall his name. Kenton or Kenyon, or something of the sort. It's supposed to be a distinction, Gerry. I haven't sought the honor, but he's a most difficult person to meet."

"Is he rich?" inquired Geraldine.

"Dreadfully, I believe. Why?"

"Because, if he's acceptable otherwise, I'm going to marry him for a home. He's not married, is he?"

"I'm sure I don't know." Eleanor shook with half-exasperated mirth. "Gerry dear, you're getting morbid. Come with me and ride around for the rest of the afternoon."

But Geraldine's lips closed tightly, and she shook her head.

"It is not to be, Ellie. I shall stay here, penned up, and grow pale and waste away like any other child of the tenements. Something awful's going to happen to me—I feel it. I shall fall in love with the janitor, or robbers will break in and shoot me—or something equally horrible. And then they may grieve over my remains, and think that I might have been spared to lure your Mr.—what was his name?—if it hadn't been for this flat."

Eleanor finally gave over the effort of cheering the suffering; and as she bowed away up the drive, the afflicted young person watched the brougham from far above, and reflected with highly satisfying self-commiseration that others might continue their wonted pleasures while she languished apart—a martyred thing.

Indeed, this "Fenelon" apartment had been, and remained, the keenest of thorns, and for two strong reasons. Primarily, the whole proposition was most distasteful to one who, from her earliest days, had viewed the same segment of Central Park from the same bay-window each morning—which window, by the way, was at a sane height above solid ground.

Further, it was flatly against the will of Miss Geraldine. That was a consideration not lightly to be passed, for to her devoted papa Geraldine bore the same aspect which that gentleman maintained toward his clerks—embodiment of the law, adamantine and inexorable. This "Fenelon" abomination reeked with transgression; one punishes transgression.

Having shivered comfortably over the chilly vista of river for a time, Geraldine turned in quest of other diversion. There were notes on the boudoir desk—dozens of them, and each deserving an answer. She closed the desk with an emphatic thump. Two or three of the month's books confronted her. She would have none of them.

Gerry, in fact, desired warmth and warmth only—warmth which should have been emanating cheerfully from the radiators and was not. If there was one warm room in the entire dozen, she would find it and camp there, contentedly miserable. Did it come to the pass of drag-

ging a chair into Paine's little pantry and having the gas-range kindled, she would have heat!

In pursuit of this ambition, Geraldine wandered on. This room was bleak; the next fairly glacial; the third reminded one of Klondike stories and snow and sleds and dogs in harness. She shuffled across to Mr. Baird's study—the only large apartment giving on the court—and dropped into a chair with a hopeless sigh. It was quite as cold as the others and rather more depressing.

Why, if one must live in a flat and pay for it as well, couldn't they furnish heat? Gerry grew angry at the management; it was a most congenial emotion. They must send up their steam! She would dispatch Paine for the manager or the superintendent or the janitor—or whatever it was—and scathe him! She decided forthwith to thresh herself into quite the typical termagant of the tenements.

Cheered by the prospect of battle, she arose with alacrity and surveyed the opposite wall of the "Fenelon" with challenging eye. What sort of creature would this manager be? Impudent in the extreme, she hoped devoutly—sufficiently impudent to be ejected by Paine and form another objection to continued "Fenelon" existence.



DRAWN BY JOHN CLITHEROE GILBERT

"Gerry dear, you're getting morbid."

But as Geraldine braced for the conflict, her attention was caught by a figure, silhouetted against the sky—a collarless, overalled man, puffing his pipe and kneeling on the roof of the "Fenelon," across the court. At his side stood a little tinker's furnace, smoking faintly and bristling with wooden handles; in fine, the picture was that of a humble mechanic, or plumber, or similar laborer, at his work; and being nearer at hand, and probably learned in the mysteries of steam-heating, very likely a more efficient person than the superintendent of the establishment.

"Paine!" called Miss Baird. "Is there any way of reaching the roof? Very well. You see that man, working over there? Tell him that I wish him to come here at once, please."

Paine departed, speculating. Geraldine witnessed the interview, noted that the gentleman in overalls arose with some hesitation and repaired to her own regions; whence presently she swept forward as the door opened and the two men appeared.

"I saw you at work," Miss Geraldine announced, curtly. "Do you understand steam-heating?"

The plumber stared frankly and palmed his pipe, and his astonished expression faded away, leaving carefully suppressed amusement.

"Yes, Ma'am," he confessed, with a jerk of the head.

"Very well. I have something for you to do."

"Well—I'm working at a job on the roof, Ma'am."

Geraldine froze.

"You are employed in this building, are you not?"

"Yes, Ma'am."

"Then whatever else you are doing may wait. I wish the radiators here attended to at once. This apartment is absolutely without heat! It's perfectly absurd!"

"Well, I'll see what I can do—Lady," the plumber sighed. "Where are they?"

"Paine, show the man our radiators," said Miss Geraldine, crisply. "See that he attends to them properly."

The servitor of the house of Baird conducted him to the drawing-room and,

with some misgivings, shortly left him there for other pressing duties.

Gerry, from a chair in the boudoir, watched him pensively through a gap in the curtains as he squatted before the radiator. She observed that he twisted something, and heard the whistle of cold air. She also heard a chuckle—mirth at the ignorance of these new tenants who knew not how to twist the correct something. Momentarily, she debated and discarded the idea of entering and challenging that chuckle; then settled down again and watched further, as the toiler crossed to the next offending coil of pipes.

Really, in spite of his raiment and the grime which freely decorated his features, the plumber seemed quite a striking person. His face was strong and square, his shoulders massive; and there was that about the cropped head which impressed Geraldine very favorably. Physically, at any rate, he was a splendid specimen of mechanic.

Then Geraldine started and smiled brilliantly at her reflection in the mirror.

What was that silly thing she had said to Ellie? Was—or was not—a plumber even lower down the social scale than a janitor? Why not fall in love with the plumber, on the spot? Not actually fall in love with the beast, of course, but—but—why, something of that sort; something that would reveal the hideous possibilities of the new life and its undesirable contacts. Surely, the faintest semblance of an affair with this fellow must be sufficiently scandalous to set aright the most misguided father! Verily, it was worth the effort! The possibility of a Mrs. Plumber and five or six little Plumbers did not occur to Geraldine at the time.

She crossed the intervening rooms and stepped through the curtains with a firm tread.

"Well?" inquired Gerry.

"The pipes was full of air, Lady." Plumber seemed rather startled at her appearance; his face straightened rapidly and reddened slightly. "Steam's coming up now. See?"

"I see. And when the steam doesn't come, you—?"

"You might try opening this cock."



DRAWN BY JOHN CLITHEROE GILBERT

"Miss Baird progressed to condescending interest in the plumber's affairs."

"Ah, yes. Quite simple, is it not? I wonder why Paine didn't know that."

"I couldn't say, Lady."

Inwardly, Geraldine resented the smile; but at least it was a respectful smile.

"Now, there are several others which need attention. Will you look them over, please?"

"Yes, Ma'am."

"This way, then." Gerry passed on; the plumber trailed awkwardly after and folded his large frame before another heater. "I suppose the trouble is the same here, isn't it—er—what is your name?"

"John, Ma'am," said the plumber thickly, as he bent over the pet-cock. "Yes, Ma'am. It's just the same. There ain't—nothing wrong with the radiators, Ma'am."

"I'm very glad to hear that. We've been positively frozen to-day. I think I should have expired, if you hadn't appeared."

"You could have sent for the superintendent of the building, Ma'am."

"Yes, that's what I meant to do when I caught sight of you."

"But it's just as well, Ma'am." The plumber looked her in the eye for the merest fraction of one second. "He don't care much about being bothered."

"Really? Then it *is* just as well, isn't it? Is this one in working order now, John?"

Mr. Paine, in passing, heard the remark, perceived his Miss Geraldine leaning artlessly on the radiator and smiling downward, and his soul shrivelled under the horror.

Well indeed was it that Mr. Paine did not follow too closely the trail of the pair through the suite. Geraldine chatted cosily, the plumber tinkered on and replied quite easily. Plumber was respectful and not too responsive, quite as a humble plumber should be. The proximity of an exceedingly pretty, exceedingly well-groomed young woman did not seem to confuse him; to very mild, half-frightened blandishments he was stolid. Plumber, perchance, had labored overmuch in flats.

Arrived at the study, Miss Baird had

progressed to condescending interest in the plumber's affairs.

"You like the work, John?" the astounded Mr. Paine understood himself to hear.

"Oh yes, Lady."

"I should think it dreadfully tiresome."

"There are times when it—ain't."

Again the plumber stole one of his fleeting direct glances, and Gerry fluttered uncomfortably. If there was admiring to be done in this matter of falling in love with the plumber, she wished it to be her monopoly.

"That's the last one, isn't it?" she put in hurriedly.

"Yes, Ma'am. I guess they'll be all right now."

"Thank you very much, John. It's very much more comfortable."

The plumber straightened into an upright position and hitched his overalls.

"Now, any time you want anything fixed up, Lady, just send for me and I'll attend to it."

"Oh, then you're employed in the building all the time?"

"Yes, Lady. I've got steady work here. I'll be on the roof there for a week yet, I guess."

"Very well." Gerry followed him to the door. "I'll remember, if anything else goes wrong. Good afternoon, John."

"Good afternoon, Lady," said the plumber, as he closed the door.

"There!" Miss Baird observed to the boudoir desk, as she hunted up her pen and prepared to attack the notes. "If poor old Paine doesn't break through his calm and report that to daddy—um!" But Paine refrained from any revelations, and in the morning Miss Gerry's incipient love affair was scattered to the winds by a 'phoned message from Ellie. Things for Eleanor's wedding had arrived on the *Touraine*; and all business and other engagements being set aside, Gerry scurried away for an exclusive view of the unpacking.

Late in the afternoon she returned, and was suddenly reminded of the plumber by a gentle sizzle of steam. Gerry smiled inscrutably, and having basked in the grateful warmth for a time, went to the

study and cast an indifferent glance across the court.

Plumber was there—laboring as he had labored yesterday, on his knees and with his pipe and furnace. Gerry smiled again, and pondered a scheme of visiting him there at his work, and discarded it with some disappointment as a little too daring.

A stifled exclamation from the rear drew her attention. Indisputably, that was Paine's voice, and raised for the instant in tones of unaccustomed emotion. Further hearkening brought forth a medley of stifled sound—swishings and hissings and hurrying of feet. Geraldine set out to investigate.

Mr. Paine was indeed in difficulties. Without warning, a faucet in his pantry had parted; the merriest of water-streams poured forth, deluging things about the room and seeming particularly partial to the sedate front of Mr. Paine's person, a dripping, oozing mass of black.

"Paine!" exclaimed Geraldine.

"I can't stop it, Miss."

"But, Paine, we'll be flooded out."

"I know it, Miss, but—"

"Stand away from it! How can you be so stupid?"

Paine backed off and stared at the fount in pathetic silence. Gerry frowned on the catastrophe for a moment; then, her eyes twinkling suddenly, she cried:

"Hurry to the roof, Paine! That man may be—may be working where you found him yesterday. Quick!"

Plumber answered the hurry call with speed—nay, with enthusiasm. It was quite a splendid sight, his attack with wrench and screw-driver upon the refractory faucet, and Geraldine would have preferred to witness and applaud the combat. But Paine and Jeanette and the chambermaid were upon the scene by now, and Gerry retreated in good order to the study.

Quite by chance, she was at the door when the excitement had passed and John's heavy footfall came down the corridor.

Geraldine started and dimpled.

"Did you succeed in repairing it?"

"Oh, yes, Ma'am."

"I hope you're not drenched?"

"Oh, no, Lady. We—we get used to these things, you know."

"I suppose so. Really, you seem to be our salvation here, in some ways."

"I'm very glad of that." Plumber hesitated. "Isn't there something else for me to do?"

"Why, I don't think so. Not to-day, at any rate." Geraldine smiled again, and spontaneously. Plumber was becoming impressed.

"Well, any time you want anything fixed—"

His tone was enthusiastic, his gaze rested upon Geraldine's daintiness; hers lingered over the massive person in overalls. And presently Miss Geraldine realized that a long pause seemed to have followed the last remark.

"Yes, John. Thank you. Of course," she said nervously, disappearing into the study. "Good day."

"Good day, Lady," the plumber sighed.

From the study, Gerry saw him return to his station above. She regarded him thoughtfully. His own occupation seemed somehow to have lost interest; the gentleman had seated himself on the roof—comfortably, if not beautifully—and appeared quite absorbed in the task of blowing tobacco smoke into the realms of nowhere in particular.

What a splendid person it was! What a figure those shoulders would have cut in evening clothes! What a shame that a man with that head and those eyes must be foredoomed to pass his days in tinkering and soldering, for a few dollars; or at best, perhaps, later on, own a little establishment under one of the elevated roads and end his existence in plumbing and patching and doing odd jobs for an unappreciative community.

Gerry sighed pathetically; then laughed. She was growing quite sentimental over the poor wretch. Two or three more visits and she decided to become more openly enamored of the plumber; and if the worst came to the worst, allow him to create a scene that would complete the affair finely. Resolution was not one of Geraldine's weak points, and the "Fenelon" apartment remained horribly distasteful.

Now, to-morrow she might try her hand

at setting something else aleak. Jeanette would be away for the afternoon. Geraldine wondered what would break most easily and plausibly; and absently noted that her plumber still smoked industriously and stared at the heavens.

On the morrow, however, it rained; and Geraldine detested rain water as thoroughly as Satan is supposed to fear another variety. The drive streamed cheerlessly; the river was entirely lost in gray haze; the all-pervading wetness seemed to have penetrated the "Fenelon" and cast an added chill upon the place.

Miss Gerry, on whom self-incarceration was beginning to pall grievously, felt lonely and angry and at odds with everything in and out of sight. Save for the occasional click of an elevator-gate, no sound was audible. Jeanette had left; Paine she had dispatched on an errand. Save for the chambermaid, she was quiet alone in the apartment; and had she known, Katie was even then exchanging confidences with other maids in the "Fenelon" laundry.

Not a note, not an invitation remained to be answered. Even the solace of telephone communication with civilization had been temporarily shattered by a broken wire. Bored inexpressibly by the chronicle of a swashbuckling cavalier of the Cromwell era, Miss Gerry was fast being lulled into disgusted, miserable



"I can't stop it, Miss."

drowsiness when an odd little crackling came faintly to her.

It was the most distant, peculiar snapping. Gerry listened for a time, wondered whether mice were added to other "Fenelon" attractions, and yawned. Then, abruptly, she sat erect and sniffed the air.

If that were not the odor of wood smoke—! Gerry's lethargy departed, and the girl was on her feet and in the corridor of the apartment. All was as it had been, save for the thin, whitish tinge in the air. It was indeed smoke! Whence the source?

She ran down the hall, gasping, and peered into one room after the other, fearful of the sight which each open door might reveal. Music-room, sleeping-rooms, dining-room, study—all were dark and gloomy with the gloom of the day.

Then the red glint of flame appeared, flickering for an instant in the crack of the pantry door. Gerry raced across and caught the knob—and sprang back with a scream of terror.

The little room was all ablaze. From the gas-range—last accursed "Fenelon" device to go wrong—roaring yellow flame told of a broken pipe and a stray match, and the havoc they were working. Varnished woodwork sputtered and crackled and threw off lurid sparks and suffocating smoke. The deep cupboard had caught as well; papers were blazing; long ribbons of red ran up the side, licked at the

ceiling and vanished, and longer, redder ribbons followed in their path.

For an infinity of time, Geraldine stared in fascination and choked for breath; but the door swung to at last and the spell seemed to break.

How could she summon help? Whoever lived in the place and how could one reach them? She ran back to the outer door and stared wildly around the hall. No human being was in sight.

The idea of calling for help did not come to her; another thought had fore stalled it. Instinctively, she dashed into the study, threw up the window, and strained her eyes for the figure of the big plumber, and screamed as she had never screamed before:

"John! John! John!"

But he was not there—of course he was not there. The man couldn't work in the drenching rain. Gerry turned cold with terror and gazed hopelessly at the coping.

Yet even as she gazed, a big man appeared suddenly, running from nowhere, as it seemed, to the edge of the roof.

"John! John!" shrieked Miss Geraldine. "Fire!"

The man stared for an instant; then turned his eyes toward the curl of smoke at the rear; then vanished as suddenly as he had appeared.

Thereafter, things assumed a nightmare quality of vagueness. From the pantry, a crash resounded.

Gerry ran thither and threw open the door again, to see the plumber's form leap in from the servants' stairway. She saw him stoop, in the face of the blaze, and dart back again; she saw that he had set water running and was casting around for some sort of vessel; she heard a shouted command to "go back! go back!" but she clung to the casement and, even in the face of the increasing heat, stared on.

Later, many hurrying shapes, material, but indistinct, seemed to be about. One staggered past, jostling her with a red iron extinguisher. Another seized her shoulders unceremoniously and set her aside, as still a third ran by with a long hose-nozzle and shouted for "water!"

Then the vagueness seemed to gather rapidly. The plumber was leaping toward her, smoking and snorting and fiery-eyed.

He caught her up bodily and held her and ran from the fire; and a far-away voice, strangely like Paine's, seemed to splutter:

"My God, sir! Miss Geraldine! She isn't—"

"Go on! Go on! I told you to go! You'll find the doctor on either the first or the second floor. Go, you damned fool! Don't stand there and gape!"

Whereupon, utter void succeeded.

Gerry, floating slowly back to earth, marveled at many strange things.

She was stretched upon a couch in the boudoir. Obviously, she had been silly enough to faint. But why this odd sensation under the shoulders? Her eyes fluttered open and closed again, and she had seen.

The plumber knelt beside her; more, the hard thing beneath her was an arm, thick and muscular! Plumber was holding Miss Geraldine in his embrace, and stranger things were tumbling brokenly from his lips:

"Sweetheart! Sweetheart!—Speak to me!—Darling—little girl! Open your eyes!—For God's sake open your eyes and speak to me! Tell me, tell me that I haven't killed you! Geraldine, dearest, open your eyes."

Miss Gerry obeyed and smiled weakly, and the plumber's head sank to the couch in one devout:

"Thank God!"

Now he was staring hungrily at her again and rambling over all manner of endearing phrases; yet Geraldine found herself curiously free from anger at the outrageous presumption.

Slowly it came over her that the unhappy man had indeed succumbed to her wiles! Rapidly, and with a rush that left her breathless, she realized that she herself had eclipsed all flights of wild imagination—that she was absolutely content to be held in his big arms and listen to him. Gerry smiled again and the strong face regarded her remorsefully.

"You're not injured? Tell me you're not hurt, child?"

"I'm not," Miss Gerry confessed, candidly.

"But you might have been—good heaven!—you might have been killed! Fool!"

Fool! Clown that I am! You might—”

“Why?” asked Geraldine, wonderingly. “You were not to blame for the fire.”

“But I was!” he groaned. “The whole senseless thing was my own doing!”

“Yours!”

“Mine, child. Yesterday—yesterday”—the plumber avoided her eye—“yesterday, when I’d finished with that faucet, they left me alone. I—well, I loosened a coupling on the gas-stove, so that—that you might have to send that man of yours over for me again to-day.”

Geraldine laughed softly as she looked at the penitent; and he, turning suddenly to her again, bent quickly and kissed unresisting lips.

All of which, by reason of their momentary isolation and their peculiar relation and the general impossibility of the whole affair, might have remained touchingly romantic for an indefinite period, had not a studied voice from behind remarked: “Er—ah—hem!”

Plumber jumped and shot awkwardly to his feet. Miss Geraldine, blazing crimson, sat erect as if operated by springs.

They were not altogether alone. In the doorway stood Mr. Baird and the physician from the lower regions of the “Fenelon,” with the horror-smitten countenance of Paine for a background.

The doctor, having smoothed away a smile, was the first to recover his tongue.

“Who is the—invalid?” he inquired.

“Miss—Miss—Baird—er—fainted.” Plumber’s enunciation seemed clogged.

“Do you feel better now, Miss Baird?”

“I am quite well, thank you.”

“And how about you, young man? Got scorched, eh?”

For the first time, Gerry noted the plumber’s appearance—the wreck of some correct neckgear, the begrimed but impeccable gray trousers, and she wondered confusedly, until her eye caught the remnant of a white shirt-sleeve, a charred rag now, hanging open to reveal blistered flesh beneath.

“John! You’re not hurt?” escaped from her.

“It’s nothing—nothing much.”

“It’s an extremely nasty burn, as you’ll discover when it begins to sting a little

more,” interposed the physician, who was not devoid of tact. “Come down with me, sir, and have it dressed.”

“But”—the plumber’s glance flitted from Miss Gerry to Miss Gerry’s silent parent—“I must say a word, Mr. Baird—”

“Don’t stop now. Say it later.”

“Most assuredly, postpone that word, sir,” said the doctor. “Loitering doesn’t pay, with such an arm as you’ve got there.”

Meekly the plumber was led away.

Geraldine gathered together a number of wandering locks and patted them into place, carefully avoiding the parental eye. She had desired a scene; like most of her desires, it had been granted; but—well, things were different. A storm was in the air, yet many seconds passed without its breaking.

“Well, Miss Gerry?”

Geraldine faced about with all her wonted sweet defiance. She found him regarding her rather quizzically.

“Sit down, young lady.”

Geraldine found a chair. Baird, watching her silently, clipped the end from a cigar and proceeded at once to the sharpest of points.

“Gerry,” he poised a match, “am I right in assuming that you cherish matrimonial designs on that young man?”

Geraldine started violently at the bald words. Heavens! Marry him! The enormity of the notion engulfed her completely. The room danced about crazily.

Yet, after all, he was made for better things. Money would easily lift him out of plumberdom and—she studied the tip of her boot for a long, long time.

And presently,

“Yes,” said Geraldine. “Do you object?”

Baird smiled.

“I seem not to have been consulted in this, Gerry. Wouldn’t it have been better—?”

“Well, do you object?” Miss Gerry asked desperately.

“To the straightest and wealthiest chap in this part of town?” Baird smiled again. “Not to him, perhaps, but to—”

“The—what?”

Miss Gerry’s papa stared in turn.

“My dear child, am I to understand that you don’t even know who the man is?”



DRAWN BY JOHN CLITHEROE GILBERT

"Plumber jumped to his feet. Miss Geraldine sat erect."

"Yes," said his daughter, faintly, turning her attention to the Hudson.

For a considerable space, Baird regarded his only daughter in thoughtful amazement. When he spoke, drily, the old, familiar quality of resignation had crept into his voice.

"The gentleman, Gerry, you may care to know, is John Kenyon—son of the old railroad Kenyon, who died three or four years ago. He is worth more money than even your Aunt Louise could lose in an ordinary lifetime. He has an account with us, and he's financing this wireless telephone scheme, I understand. He—"

"But, dad, he was there on the roof—working, you know—in overalls and—and dirt, and—."

"Kenyon, my dear, lives in the 'Fenelon,'"

"Lives here!"

"Exactly. He's a hermit of the old school—electro-maniac, if there happens to be such a word. Kenyon is a very serious young man, I can tell you. Tinkers seven days in the week up there in his workshop on the roof—that sheet-iron shanty—you can't see it from here. I was up there the day before we came in. He had what I should imagine was about all the sheet tin in creation spread out on

the roof, and he was soldering it all together, according to some tangled up plan or other. But how, Gerry—?"

Gerry's arms were around his neck.

"Never mind how, Daddy," she laughed half-hysterically, "I don't quite know myself—but it's done, and I'm happy. Isn't that enough? And won't you go down and make sure that he isn't badly hurt?"

Late that night, the wind still whistled, and torrents of rain lashed the windows, but the peculiar gloom had left the ninth floor of the "Fenelon."

"And we're not going to have a *flat*, are we?" Miss Gerry inquired.

"I don't know about that," said a man with a bandaged arm. "I have an affection for flats."

"Because your *début* as a plumber was made in this one?"

"Very likely."

"But you'll have to retire from business now."

"I'm not so sure of that," Kenyon replied softly. "I've been extremely successful in the line so far. I say, you don't really mind living in a place like this?"

The colors of rebellion were struck.

"Of course not," said Miss Geraldine.



The Isle of Illusion

BY NEIL MUNRO

Macdonnell of Morar, on the summer of his marriage, and when the gladness of it was still in every vein, sailed his sloop among the Isles. He went from sound to sound, from loch to loch, anchoring wherever the fancy took his lady, and the two of them were seeking what no one ever found nor shall find—that last and swooning pang of pleasure the Isles in summer weather, either at dawn or dusk, seem always to promise to youth and love. At night they lay in bays in the dim light of the cool north stars, or in the flush of the sunken sun that made wine of the sea waves, and the island cliffs or the sandy shores seemed populous with birds or singing fisher people.

It was very well then with Morar.

His wife was still a girl. In the mornings, when she came on deck with her hair streaming and the breeze making a banner of her gown, her gaiety surging to her breast in song, she seemed to him and to his men like one of the olden sea princesses told about in Gaelic stories, born from foam for the happiness and hurt of the hearts of men. She was lovely, tender, and good, and he himself, with those that knew him best, was notable for every manly part. One thing only he had a fear of in his bride—that, as had happened with others before, and perhaps with himself, a day might come to him when the riddle of her would be read, her maidenly sweet mystery revealed; when he could guess with certainty what was in the deep, dark wells of her eyes, and understand, without a word, the cause for every throb of her bosom. To have her for ever with a part to baffle and allure, as does the sea in its outer caves, and as do the dawns in Highland glens—that was the wish of Morar.

The captain of the yacht, who, having no passion for her, knew her better, some ways, than her husband, perhaps, said she had what westward in the Barra isles he hailed from they called the Seven Gifts for Women—content and gentleness, looks

and liking, truth, simplicity, and the fear of God. To him and to his men, gallant fellows from Skye and somewhat jealous of her that she was not of the isles herself, but a stranger, she was at last without a flaw. One time they thought it might be temper was her weakness, for she walked the deck with pride and had a noble carriage of the head, a deep, quick and conquering eye, but the tiniest cloud of temper never crossed her honeymoon. Indeed, it was well with Morar.

And it seemed that summer as if the very clime befriended him, for there never blew but the finest breezes, and the sun was almost constant in the sky. Round all the remoter isles they sailed—even Harris and the Uists, and the countless lesser isles that lie to the west of Scotland, an archipelago where still are dwelling the ancient Gaelic gods, whereto at least they come at sunset and sit upon the sands communing, so that sailors knowing the language, and having the happy ear, can sometimes catch far off at sea deep murmurs of the olden world that others take for the plash of waters.

Morar's wife put the yacht into every creek. She loved the little creeks, she doted on the burns going mourning through the darkness, and on the sound of tides on shallow shores; it was her great delight sometimes to sleep on land below a canvas shelter, bathe at morning in the inner pools, walk barefoot on the sand, or stand on rocky promontories facing the rising sun, with her hair tumultuous. Her first breakfast then was the wild berry, her morning drink the water from island wells.

"I could live on the berries," she would say to her husband. "Oh, I love them!"

"Doubtless, *mochree*," would he answer her, laughing. "Faith! it's my notion they have been growing all these years in the islands waiting just for you; their bloom is on your cheek, it's the berry stain that was on your lips since ever I knew you. But for a common person like myself there is a certain seduction in a sea trout or a

herring. Madame, I wish you joy of your wild berries, and indeed I love the taste of them—on your lips—but let me press on you a simple cabin-biscuit, though it suffers from having been baked by the hand of man.”

“And the berry comes straight from God,” would be her answer. “It’s the fruiting of the clean wild wind; I sometimes think that if I could eat it always I should live forever.”

“Then, faith, I’ll grow it in Morar garden by the pole, and you shall eat berries at every meal,” said her husband. “Perhaps I’ll acquire the taste myself. Meanwhile, let me recommend the plain prose of our cooking galley.”

“And I declare that I can find in pure water something as intoxicating as wine and far more subtle on the palate.”

“A noble beverage, at least they tell me so, as the piper says in the story,” said Morar, “yet God forbid that a too exclusive diet of berries and water should send Macdonnel back a widower to Morar! I take leave to help you to another egg,” and so saying he would laugh at her again, and she would laugh also, for the truth was that she never brought to the cabin table but a yachtman’s appetite.

One thing she missed in all these island voyagings was the green companionship of trees. She came from a land of trees, and sailing day after day past isles that gave no harbor to so little as a sapling, she fretted sometimes for the shady deeps of thicket and the sway of boughs. Often she sat on deck at nightfall and imagined what the isles must have been before disaster overtook them, when the noble pines went marching over the mountains and the birds had their nests overhanging every island cove.

“Can you think of us wandering in the avenues, sitting in the glades? Barefoot or sandal, loose light garments, berries and water, the bland sea air, shade from the sun and shelter from the shower, and the two of us always young and always the same to each other”—it was a picture she put before him many times, half-entranced as if she once had known a life like that before, far back in another age and climate than in Scotland of the storms. Kissing her lips, wet from some mountain well, her

husband got to look on her now and then as some Greek girl of the books, and himself as an eternal lover who had heard the wind blowing through boughs in Arcady.

Loving trees as she did, it was strange that so long they should have failed to visit Island Faoineas, for often in their voyagings it lay before them on the sea—green, gracious and inviting, its single hill luxuriant with hazel-grown *eas* or corrie, its little glen adorned with old plantations. It lies behind Bernera, south of Harris, hiding coy among other isles and out of the track of vessels, and for reasons of his own the captain of the yacht sailed always at a distance from it, keeping it in the sun’s eye, so that its trees should seem like black, tall cliffs with the white waves churning at their feet. But one day Morar and his wife came to him with the chart. “This island here,” they said together. “We have not seen it close at hand; let us go there to-night.”

The captain’s face changed; he made many excuses. “A shabby, small place,” he told them, “with a poor anchorage. And the wind is going westward with the sun. I think myself Lochmaddy better for an anchoring this night than Ealan Faoineas.”

“What does the name mean—this Ealan Faoineas?” asked Morar’s wife, looking out toward the island that was too distant yet to show its trees.

“It means,” said Morar, “the Isle of Seeming—that is to say, the Isle of Illusion.”

“What a dear name!” she cried, clapping her hands. “I should love to see it. Are there trees?” Her eyes were on the captain’s face, he dared not lie.

“What you might be calling a sort of trees,” he grudgingly admitted. “Oh, yes, I will not be saying but what there are two or three trees, or maybe more, for I have not paid much attention to Ealan Faoineas myself.”

“Indeed!” said she. “Then it is time you were amending your knowledge of it. I think we will risk the anchorage for the sake of the trees.”

It was her own hand put down the helm and herself who called the men to sheet, for the captain had a sudden slack-

ness in his office and was forward murmuring with his crew.

"What ails him?" the lady asked her husband.

"You have me there!" he answered her, as puzzled as herself. "I think it is likely there may be some superstition about the island; the name suggests as much, and now that I come to think of it I remember I once heard as a boy that sailors never cared to land on one or two of the Outer Isles, believing them the domain of witchcraft. We must have passed that island frequently, and the captain always kept us wide of it. I will ask him what its story is that makes him frightened for it."

He went forward by and by and talked with the captain.

"I am a plain man. I have not the education except for boats," said the seaman, "and I would not set foot on Faoineas for the wide world. You will not get a man in all the Outer Islands, from Barra Head to the Butt of Lewis, who would step on Faoineas if the deck of his skiff was coming asunder below the very feet of him. I am brave myself—oh, yes! I come of people exceeding brave and notable for deeds, but there is not that much gold in all the Hebrides, no, nor in the realm of Scotland, would buy my landing in that place yonder."

"Come! come! what is wrong with the island that you should have such a fear of it?" asked Morar, astounded at so strong a feeling.

"It is bad for men, and it is worse for women," said the captain.

"Is it something to hurt the body?"

"If it was but the body I would be the first ashore. I have not so much money put past me that I have any need to be afraid for my life," said the captain.

"Are there ghosts there, then?" said Morar, determined to be at the roots of the mystery.

"Ghosts!" cried the captain. "Where are they not, these gentlemen?"

By this time the sloop that Morar's wife was steering had drawn closer on the island, breaking her way among the bil-lows striving into Harris Sound, and to the gaze of Morar's wife, and to her great bewilderment, she saw the little glen with

its bushes climbing high on either side of it, and the tall, great, dark old Highland trees beyond, and thickets like gardens to the south, and under all the deep cool dusk of shadows she had longed for all those days that she and her husband had sought for the last pang of pleasure in their honeymoon among the Outer Isles. She leaned upon the tiller, and stared entranced and unbelieving, for it seemed a fairy isle, such as grows fast in dreams and sinks to the sea depths again when dawn is on the window. Only when she saw rooks rise with cawings from the branches, and heard the song of birds unknown on the treeless islands, was she altogether convinced of its reality.

"Darling," she cried to her husband, "look! Were we not right? Here's a forgotten Paradise!"

"If Paradise it be, then may you have your share of it," said the captain as he put them ashore. "Myself, I would not risk it, so long as this world has so many pleasant things to be going on with. All I can tell you of Island Faoineas is that, paradise or purgatory, it depends on what one eats and drinks there. I heard it from a priest in Eriskay, a noble and namely man through all the islands of the West. Once he had landed here and known some wonders. He died in Arisaig, and in his dying blessed with the seven blessings one well upon this island, but which of all that run there I never learned."

That night Morar and his bride slept out in the shelter of hazel bushes and shelisters. They built a fire and drank out of the same glass from a burn that sang through the shelisters, and as they slept there were many wells that ran merrily through their dreams, but one particularly that rose from a hillock beside them and tinkled more sweetly than golden jewels streaming down a golden stair.

She was the first to waken in the morning, and stealing softly from him she left the embers of their fire among the rushes and went wandering among the trees, so that when he rose he saw her figure, airy and white, among their columns. She seemed the spirit of the trees to his doting

eye, as though 'twas there among them she had always dwelt; the wood was furnished and completed by her presence. And he heard her sing a Highland air he had been at pains to teach her, one the seamen of his yacht were used to raise at nightfall when they felt the influence of the strange dark mountains, and remembered their home in Skye of the bens and glens. Leaning on his side, he watched her pass among the branches seeking for berries; he saw her running to some tiny bushes and pluck their fruit, and then come hastening back to him.

"There is not in the world a sweeter place," she cried, "and I have never seen such berries! Look, I have brought you some, Sir Sluggard, that we might taste them first together." She put a spray of the berries between her teeth, and let him sweeten the fruit with a kiss as he took his share from her lips with his own.

"The woman tempted me, and I did eat," said Morar, laughing, and culled the berries with his arms around her. They burst on his palate with a savor sharp and heady. He was about to ask for more when he saw her change. The smile had suddenly gone from her face at his words; for the first time he saw that her eyes were capable of anger.

"Upon my word," said she in an impatient voice, "I think it a poor compliment to me after my trouble in getting the berries for you that you should have such a thought in your head about me."

"There you go," he answered quickly, an unreasonable vexation sweeping through him in a gust. "Did ever any one hear the like, that because I am indiferent to your silly berries you should snarl like a cat?"

"A cat!" she cried, furious.

"Just a cat," he repeated deliberately. "For God's sake give me peace, and get your hair up before the men come ashore for us. It is time we were home. I am heart-sick of this sailing. And it ill becomes a woman of your years to play-act the child and run barefoot about island sands."

The berries she still held in her hand she crushed between her palms till the juice of them stained her gown, and ran like blood between her fingers. The per-

fume rose to her nostrils, and seemed to fill her head with a pungent vapor.

"Well? Well?" he said, with irritation at her staring. She covered her eyes with her hands and burst into tears.

He only whistled. Some way she appeared a sloven in dress, awkward in gesture, and a figure of insincerity. If he had not a sudden new conviction that she was everything she should not be, there was the accent of her voice, the evidence of his eyesight. For when, in wild exasperation at his manner, she took her hands from her face, she showed a visage stained and sour, tempestuous eyes, and lips grown thin and pallid.

"I hate you! I hate you!" she cried, and stamped with her bare feet on the sand. "I cannot for my life understand what I ever saw in you that I should have married you. Any one with her senses might have hesitated to tie herself for life to a man with so much evil in his countenance."

"Yours would be none the worse for washing," said Morar, remorselessly, with an eye on her berry-stained face.

"There's a gentleman!" she cried. "Oh! my grief, that I should have spoiled my life!"

"You know what I was when you took me," said Morar. "Lord knows I made no pretense at angelic virtues, and 'twas there, by my faith! I was different from yourself."

"And there's the coward and liar too," cried his wife. "You were far too cunning to show me what you really were, and it must have been a woeful ignorance of the world that made me take you on your own estimate."

"Well, then, the mistake has been on both sides," said Morar. "There's no one could be more astonished than myself that my real wife should be so different from what till this hour I had imagined her. Madam, you need not be so noisy; if you scream a little louder the crew will be let into a pretty secret. It is like enough they know you already, for I have been singularly blind."

He put up what seemed to her for the first time an unlovely hand to stifle a forced yawn; she saw an appalling cruelty in the mouth that had so often kissed her

and called her sweet names; his very attitude expressed contempt for her.

"What have I done?" she asked, distractred.

"It is not what you have done," he said, with a coarse deliberation, "'tis what you are and what you cannot help being. The repentance must lie with me. I would give, gaily, ten years of my life to obliterate the past six months."

"Faith, 'tis a man of grace and character says so to his newly-married wife."

At these words Morar started slightly, and looked, for a moment, confused. "Newly-married!" he said; "Lord help us! so we are. Some way, I fancied we had been married for years. Well, we have not taken long to discover each other, and will have the more leisure to repent. I understand you, madam, into the very core; there is not a vein of your body hides a secret from me. I was mistaken; I thought your beauty something more than a pink cheek; I thought you generous till I saw how generous you could be at my expense, and how much the rent-roll of Morar weighed with you in your decision to marry me. I thought you humble and unaffected, and now I see you posing about this business of bare feet on the sand, the morning breeze in your gown, breakfasts of berries and water."

"Pray go on," cried the lady. "Pray go on. Every word you say confirms the character I now see in your face."

"I thought you truthful, so you are—in the letter and the word, but the flattery you have for those you would conciliate, the insincerity of your laugh in the presence of those you would please, the unscrupulousness of your excuses for the omission of duties unpleasant to you—what are these but lies of the worst kind?"

"Oh, heavens," she cried, "I was not always so! If I am so now I must be what you made me. I remember—" she drew her hand across her brow; "I seem to remember some one else I thought was me, that loved you, and could not be too good and pure for you even in her imagination. You seemed a king to that poor foolish girl's imagination; she loved you so—she loved you so, she was so happy."

"Just so!" said Morar. "You had, seemingly, well deceived yourself. And now I can tell you that you may cry your eyes out, for I know what a woman gets her tears so readily for. It is that when she is crying and lamenting she may not betray her chagrin and ill-temper in her face. Have done with it, and let us get out of this. I see the men put out the boat, they will be with us in a moment; for heaven's sake let us have no more theatricals. The fate of us both is sealed, and we must, I suppose, live the rest of our lives together like the other married fools we know—putting as fair a face as we can on a ghastly business."

She was standing beside tall blades of shelister—the iris of the isles—and when he spoke like this to her she suddenly plucked a handful and began to tear them wantonly with her fingers.

"I assure you that you have seen the last of my tears," said she. "I would not cry out if you struck me! There is something almost as sweet as love, and that is hate, and I seem to have come from a race that must have either. I have a feeling in me that I could have loved eternally if I had found the proper object, but now I know that I can always be sure you will keep me hating, and I am not sorry. Yes, yes, you have said it, Morar, a ghastly business; but I will not put any fair face on it to deceive the world, I assure you! It could not be deceived, blind would it be indeed if it could not see the sneer in your face, and hear the coward in your voice."

"Silence, you fool; the men are coming!" he said, clutching at her wrist and twisting it cruelly.

She gave a little shriek of pain, and caught at her breast with the other hand, that held the broken blades of shelister.

"Oh, you have struck me!" she cried. "That is the end of my shame, and I shall make you suffer." And so saying, she tightened her grasp on the last green blade.

He saw a poniard glint momentarily in the morning sun that was turning Isle Faoineas' sands to gold, and before he could prevent her she had plunged the weapon into her bosom. She fell with a cry at his feet, her hair in the ashes of the

fire they had last night sat by. The blood came bubbling to her mouth and welled out on her bosom where the poniard rose and fell with her moaning.

For a moment, instead of pity and remorse, there was a feeling of release. Behind him sounded the splash of oars; he turned hastily and saw the men had left the sloop and were approaching land. "Oh, Dhia!" he said to himself, "here's a bonny business to explain!" and then 'twas very far from well with Morar, for he heard the woman moan her wish for water, and he knew she shared the agony of that inward fire that scorched his throat as if the berries he had swallowed had been beads of heated metal. At his feet was the glass they had drunk from on the last night of their happiness; he picked it up and ran to the well that tinkled on the hillock, then hurried to her side and raised her up to let her drink.

The draught, it seemed, revived her; she shuddered, and sighed, and turned in his arms. Then his own torment mastered him, and he drank too.

Through his whole flesh went a pleasant chill; a gladness danced in him, and he saw a thing miraculous in his bride—the flush come back to her cheek, and all her wild, sweet beauty, and her smile, as she leaned against his shoulder like one

new-waked from sleep, so that he looked into her face, and saw himself reflected in her eyes. The berry stains were on her lips, the bosom of her gown was reddened with their juices, and in between her breasts lay the blade of the shelister, sparkling with dew, and glinting in the sunshine as it rose and fell in time with her heart's pulsations.

"Oh, love!" she said, and put her arms about his neck; "I dreamt—I dreamt a dreadful dream!"

"And I, sweetheart," said Morar, looking aghast at the berry stains, and the mark of his fingers on her wrist, and on the iris blade, that were evidence it had been no dream. "I dreamt, too, love, my God! such dreaming! I do not wonder now the world holds far aloof from this Island of Illusion. God bless the well, the holy well; but the curse of curses on the berries of Ealan Faoineas!"

Together, hand in hand, they fled to the shore and waded out on the sandy shallow to meet the boat; the sloop shook out her sails like some proud, eager bird; from her deck, together, waist-encircled, they saw the blue tide rise on the yellow sands, the trees nod, the birds flit among the thickets of the glen, and heard the tinkle of the well in Ealan Faoineas.



Old Bill Cupid

BY ROY E. NORTON

"There they go," said my friend Slocum—Old Bill Slocum—grumpily, as he kicked with heavily-booted foot at the bed of coals surrounding a much battered and time-worn Dutch oven, which, from its fiery resting place in front of the cabin, exuded the unmistakable odor of beans.

I turned and looked at the mountain trail, which he thumbwise indicated, in time to catch a parting hand-wave from a happily smiling girl who was teeteringly seated in a mountain buckboard. An instant later it vanished clatteringly around a turn, skillfully driven by a broad-shouldered young man who was clad in clean flannel shirt, new sombrero and general gala attire.

"There they go," repeated Bill, as he seated himself on a section of log, "happy as a pair of twin calves or a Piute with a red bandanner. And all because this old fellow Cupid has lariated and

double-cinched 'em together." Then, his weather-tanned, gray-bristled face relaxed into a broad grin, he told me, with many subdued chucklings, a fresh story of his varied Oriental experiences.

"I'm chuck full of sympathies for Old Mister Cupid, because I'm some on that lay myself. One time while I was in Japan, before white men were so common there, I played the game—played it, too, with a full house, nine hundred in the pot and no limit.

"There was an idiot by the name of Bellairs came down into the Yavapai country, a canary-bird mining sharp, corrugated corduroys, fore-and-aft cap and yellow chaps—the regular type—from Heaven knows where. I bossed one of his mines until one day he seduces me by saying, 'Bill, I'm going to Korea to operate some property. I want a man like you to go with me to Japan, where



DRAWN BY Y. BAYONARA

"I felt as Japanese as anybody in the Island." See page 598

you'll stop, and check and properly forward a lot of machinery.'

"'Nope,' says I, 'Arizony's good enough for me.'

"'But you don't need to stay more than six months or a year,' he answers, 'and it's a new country, worth seeing.'

"I always did have an eye for the card that was lowest in the deck, and rumination made me restless until my mind got to milling like a bunch of long-horns on a rainy night, and I finally stampeded for fair and took his bet.

"Sea-sick? Say, before I landed in Nagasaki my hankerings for a change were about satisfied, but I calculated to die game. Got over it all right, though, when I got my stomach to working regular shifts and clamoring for food, and before long I felt as Japanese as anybody on the island. But lonesome—by the graven whiskers of the great Buddha, I was so lonesome over there I could have cried for the sight of a coyote. No excitement unless you paid for it, and in ten days they thought I was an American millionaire, which same kind weren't any too common then. They gold-bricked me and shell-gamed me, until I got so suspicious I wouldn't listen to any conversational curves unless the man ran me down and roped me.

"My chief puncher was a skinny old cuss who used to wrinkle his hide handling machinery by days and smooth it out gambling by nights. My evening *passiar*, being a kind of natural gravitation to a gambling layout, would usually find him over some game, his eyes sticking out like a tarantula's and his lips dry and cracked from excitement. If he won, I'd have to round him up the next day, as he was the only one of the outfit that could chew English. If he lost, he'd show up looking like I used to feel after a night in Phoenix. His little white language saved my aggravations from cutting my brand off his hide and sacking him a dozen times.

"Well, one night, having nothing else to do, I stands by a game where this despisable little mummy is contributing his roll to the general donations, and observes that he's up against it rougher than usual. Kind of a 'can't-I-never-win'

way with him, his hands twitchin' like a freshly-rope pony's flanks, and his teeth trying to make friends with each other through his nervous lips.

"Smash—and he's broke. Then he piles up to another old pelter there and talks fast and hard. 'Wants another stack,' says I to myself, watching his maneuvers. Finally, after dickerin' a while with the old feller, he turns to me, and says, 'I sellum you.'

"'Sell what?' I remarks outside, and inside says, 'Here comes that brick again.'

"'Lill girl,' he splutters, 'my lill girl.'

"'What's that?' I says, not quite comprehending.

"'I sellum you my lill baby girl,' he says louder, and then I understands.

"'You dirty old scrub,' I snaps out, feeling like catching him by the slack skin of his face and working it like putty, 'you'll sell me nothing. I'm abolitionist clean through, and want no slaves, white, black or tan colored.'

"'All light,' he answers, 'me sellum other man,' and turns back to this old mud scow he's been palavering with. There's where I gets sentimental like.

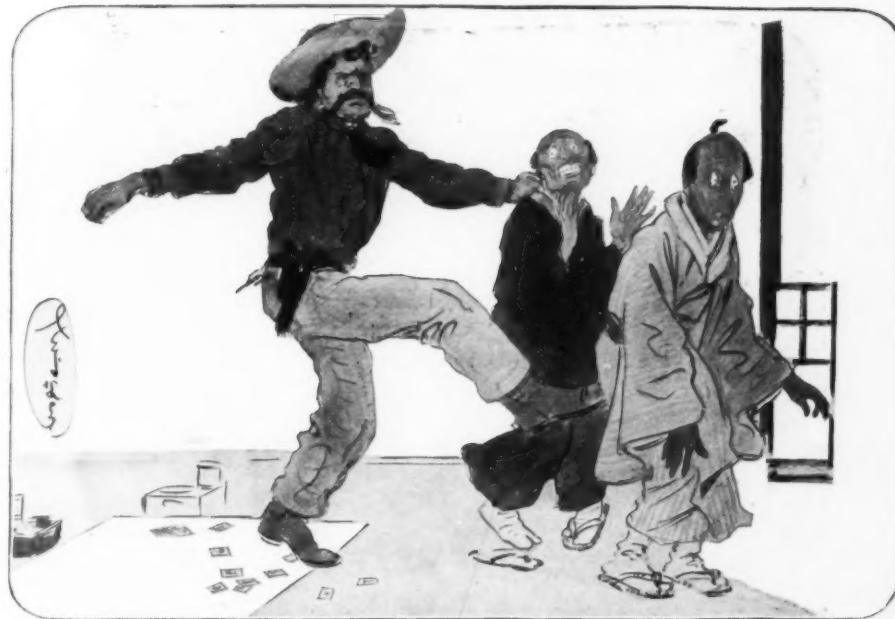
"'Bill,' says I, 'you aren't going to let that card-crazy old walloper sell his own child to a unwashed, warty gila monster like that, are you?' feeling sorrowful for the poor little devil that's about to be sold like a second-hand saddle, just because her father's up against the game.

"'Hold on, there,' says I, interrupting proceedings just as the warty old party was about to take a quit-claim deed. He looked as pleasant as a rattler pinned down by the tail. I ended his volubilities by turning him around and sending a number-nine boot into him till his teeth clattered like castanets, industriously hanging onto my gambling man meanwhile. And he too looks as happy as if his was about due.

"'How much you want?' I says, not taking the trouble to pry my teeth apart for conversation.

"Then he smiles, hyena-like, and figures twenty-seven dollars, American.

"'Done,' I remarks, 'C. O. D., which spells cod, and means you don't put your greasy fingers on the coin till you bring the girl to my shanty. But if you sell



DRAWN BY Y. SAYONARA

"Industriously hanging on to my gambling-man meanwhile."

to some other feller—" and here I affectionately and suggestively pats my Colts, which I always carries for company, 'I'll unlimber a ton of lead into your livin' quarters.'

"Sore to the core, I climbed the hill to the shack I had rented, waded through the tea patch to the door, and lighted the lamp. I stepped to the window, and stood there, not even noticing the plum-blossom smell, when up through the moonlight comes a shadow and into the doorway comes that mean old sheepherder, dragging a girl of about sixteen.

"What the devil—" yells I, as she turns her face to the wall, pulls the loose end of her *obi* over her head and sobs as if her heart was clean gone from her.

"See here, old leather face," I continues, "I thought 'twas a baby. What do you think I'm to do with this?"

"You keep um," says this loving old parent. "Plentee cook, work, bimeby raise children. Spik lill Inglis. Nice lill girl. You get um cheap."

"I knows it was custom, and that many a foreigner had bought 'em similarly, but even a bargain sale wouldn't have made

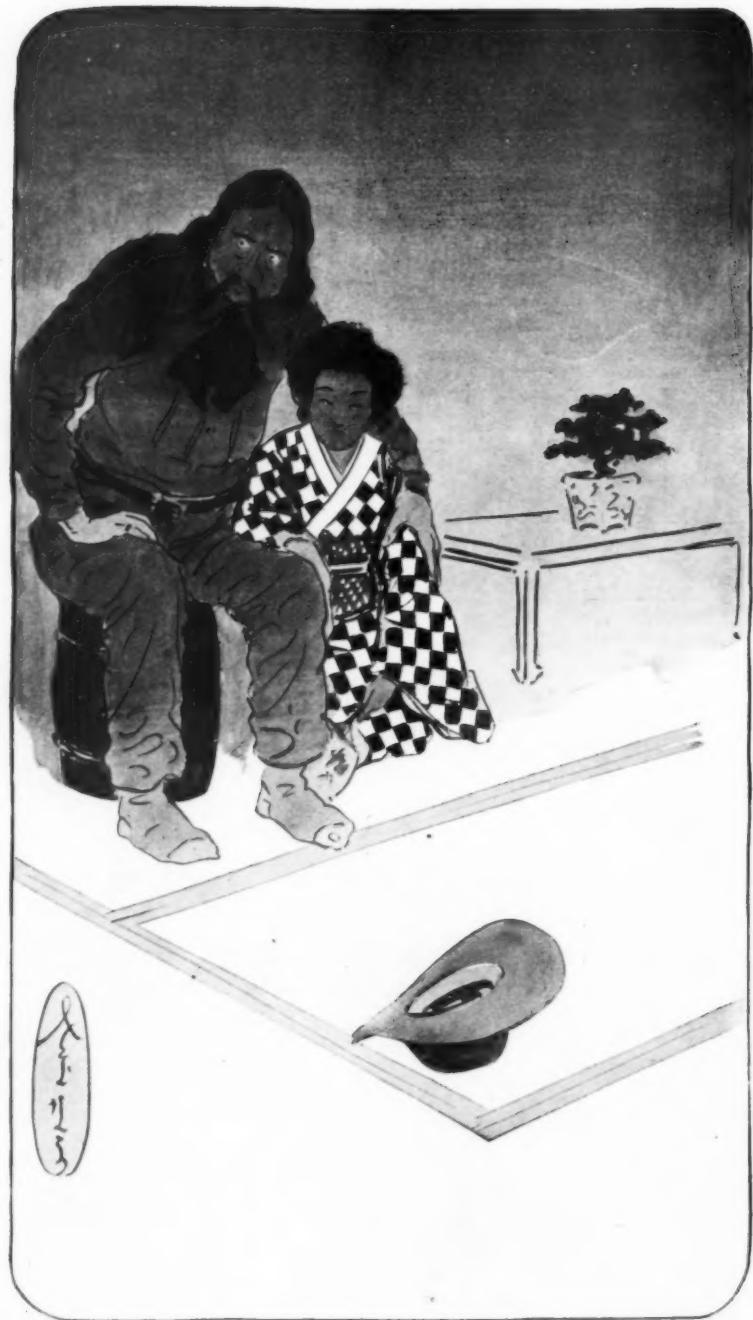
me take her if I hadn't thought some one worse than me might get her if I turned the deal down.

"Here's the coin," I snarls, and then bubbled over like a soda fountain, and was happy for a minute as I started in to shorten his backbone by kicking the south end of it. Land? I reckon I landed twenty times as he sprinted for the gate in my little wall.

"If ever I see you again, my bucko, I'll send you to the happy tea grounds to get acquainted with your dishonorable ancestors," I yells after him, and then my freshet of language makes the plum blossoms on the whole hillside wither as if hit by a Cajon breeze.

"I was so sore at the old buck jumper that I spit up chunks of cowboy talk all the way back into the shack, to where my little lady was heaped on the floor, scared stiff, and shivering as if she thought I had come back to tear her to shreds and throw the chunks at her departing daddy. Big and awkward I felt, as I looked at that little runt cowering on the mat.

"Pore little girl," I says, trying to lift



DRAWN BY Y. SAYONARA

"In a funny mixture of Japanese and English, tells me all about it."

her on her feet, but she bawls harder than ever and grovels to my boots.

"Get up," I orders, "that don't go with old Bill," and then by main strength jerks her into her shoes and holds her against the wall.

"Stop it!" I bellows, aggravatedly. "I ain't going to eat you, leastwise if you keep quiet, but if you don't——" and here I gritted my teeth until she was afraid to whimper.

"You sabe my talk?" I says, trying her English out, and she nods "yes."

"Then listen," I goes on, "I ain't going to be mean to you. You're mine, I reckon, because I bought you. I don't want you any more than you want me, and I'd just as soon buy a circus elephant as you. You're going to be as big a nuisance as a locoed cayuse. I've got no place to eat you, or sleep you, my wardrobe wasn't built to fit you, and I'd a heap rather cook my own grub than ruin my insides with this Japanese style of culinaries. As for laundry work, I don't have much done. You sleep there," I ends, pointing to my bunk, and grabbing up a blanket off the window ledge.

"As I rolled up, cowboy fashion, on the porch, I couldn't help thinking what a mess I'd got into. Not that I minded giving up my sleeping place, for I'd bunked worse all my life, but pestered to death to know what to do with her.

"See here, Bill," I argues to myself, "you're up against new work. You don't know nothing about innocent girls like this, even if her hide is yellow. The kind you've grazed with are a different brand."

"And then, if you'll believe me, I felt kind of ashamed of some things I'd done in my life, and of most of the women folks I'd known and associated with back on the range, and still hating myself for all that I wasn't, I went to sleep.

"When daylight comes, shoving the darkness out of the plum trees and tea bushes, I gets up easy and tiptoes inside. There she was, sweet as a little angel, her face, hardly more than a girl's and just beginning to look sorrowful like a woman's, stained with tears that I reckoned had rivulated down 'most all night. Her baby hands didn't look like they could do much work, and I could see she tried to

keep 'em clean. Wrapped up as she was, I could see her shuddering and hear her moan with grief.

"That got to me worser than ever. If I hadn't been afraid of stampeding her entirely out of her head, I'd have taken her in my arms and petted her, and said, 'Little pal, don't you worry, because old Bill Slocum ain't such a tough proposition as he looks. He won't allow no old wart-faced goat to drag you off and make one of them fool dancin' bears outen you, for the eddyfication of a bunch of tar-handed, booze-loaded sailors.'

"But I didn't. I just pulls the blinds down so she could sleep, gets some grub out of the *cache* and tiptoes out, making so much noise I felt like a ten-stamp mill and abusing of myself for being such an unhandy old maverick.

"That night I finds the shack slicked up, a bunch of posies on the table and supper waiting.

"Fed yet?" I says, wanting to be sociable, but she shakes her head.

"Sit down," I remarks, shoving a chair at her; but she just crosses her hands over her breast, makes one of them ducking courtesies you read about, I reckon, and stands behind.

"All right. T'ell with you," says I, ruffled, and eats my grub with her watching and rattling me until I didn't know what I had, whether my mouth was my ear or my hands my feet. Almost cut my mouth off with my knife, trying to be polite. Then I meanders to the village.

"That keeps up three or four days, till she got kind of used to seeing me around and didn't seem to mind it so much. Getting kind of halter-broke. One night I comes home early and hears her sobbing where she was stretched out on my cot, clean overloaded with sorrow. I sits down by her—easy—and smooths down her hair, not knowing what else to do.

"Tell old Bill all about it, little girl," I says, feeling 'most as troubled as she did. "I ain't going to harm you, and I want to make you happy."

"And then, not knowing whether she understood or not, but talking mainly to hear myself gab and spar for time, I tells her the whole story, including a few choice reflections in real range style on

the filialities of that dirty old dad of hers, who had disappeared for other pastures after that time I handed him a few persuading arguments as he went over the front wall.

"She savied, because as I talked she quieted. Pretty soon she proved it by telling me, in a funny mixture of Jap and English, all about it. How she had studied English, and tried to be a real lady, even though her ancestor was a bad old pill; how she had expected to be paid for and married by a very nice young feller, Nankipo, who was slaving away at ivory carving to get the coin, and how now it was all off.

"Then she flops to her knees with her hands crossed, and indicates that she is wearing my 'Bar S' brand, and she'll stand the gaff, whether I beat her, keep her, or fatten her and ship her to the stock yards for sale.

"Things just floated along, stature quo, as the lawyer men say, for about ten days after that, me feeling sorrowful as ever, sleeping rolled up in my blankets, and sneakingly watching that wistful little face in the mornings when she was still asleep. But we didn't talk no more, as she was shy as one of them little blue flowers you see on the tops of the Sierra Leones.

"I was working mighty hard days, as the job was about cleaned up and I was homesick for the range. Wanted to feel the air of Arizony on my face again, and hit the high hills with a pick, or get a cayuse between my legs and ride like a Chinook across the country where there ain't no fences and nothin' but wide space, free air and God.

"Then this fellow Bellairs, my boss, shows up and wants me to go over to Korea with him; but when I says 'Nope, me for Arizony,' he laughs and pays my wages in full.

"After that I had a few drinks of saki, and began contemplating buying a barrel, drinking it all, turning myself loose and shooting the town up some, just to show 'em that a true American citizen could kick up some excitement even in Japan. Thought I'd buy a ticket on the next steamer to make sure of getting home, and then hit 'em up for a few whoops.

"Funny how little things will make a man throw off on a good resolution, and make a slobbering idiot of himself. Here I was, with the intention of having a real good old Yavapai drunk, a howlingly boisterous time, when I happens to remember my little woman in the tea house up on the hill.

"'What in the great horn spoon are you going to do with her, Bill?' I asked myself. But being a heap better at questions than answers, gets no reply. Then I buys a quart of saki and goes down to the wharf to figure it out between drinks.

"'You can't leave her here for her disreputable old dad to boss again, if ever he shows up, and you don't want the old wart to steal her, claiming he bought her, or that she's a maverick due for his branding iron. She ain't got no coin, and no ranch on which to roll her blankets.'

"And about that time I began to get them queer lumps in my throat at the thought of leaving her.

"'Why not?' says I, after cogitating. 'She's yours, she's the only good girl you've ever known, and a heap too pretty to wear your brand; but you can't take her with you.' And then it came swamping over me how lonesome I was.

"'No, Bill,' I thought, 'she'd be as lonesome for Japan and its queer tribe as you are for the range and yellow hills, but she's helpless, so here you've got to stick. But it's got to be done on the level!'

"That settles it. I shoves the remnants of the saki in my pocket, with the neck of the bottle sticking out suggestive-like, and hits the trail for my landlord's.

"'What'll you take for your dump?' says I when I found him, and when he named the price, with his mouth open and his eyes sticking out like question marks, I pulls my poke and pays him. Takes him by the ear and leads him to the American consul to be sure I wasn't getting gold-bricked again, and gets the papers good and ship-shape.

"'Make that there deed out to—to—to,' I stammers, because I didn't know the girl's name, and thought some of home-steading.

"'Yum Chee,' butts in the landlord, 'your alle same——' and then he uses a



DRAWN BY Y. SAYONARA

"What's your name, pardner?" See page 604

word that don't go with good women, and the last I saw of him he was running up the street wiping the marks of my wrath off his nose. I guess he got hurt some, but the consul laughed when he finished witnessing the papers. I liked that consul better when he shook hands and said, 'Slocum, you may have fallen into evil ways, but you are a man at heart, just the same.'

"As I meandered cheerily off up the lane I takes a few more for the good of my stomach, and then I gets so bright my intellect must have nearly set my hair on fire.

"'Oh, I am young Lochinvar,
Just come out of the west
In search of a preacher,
And you know the rest,'

I sings in my melliferous voice, as loud as I could sing, composing a little love ditty for my own first appearance. Funny how that saki works on you!

"They gave me a clean berth, and all of a sudden, off up the row, standing kind of terrified, I sees the man I'm looking for, a long-necked, scrawny, psalm-singing missionary chap, that had come to the diggings a few weeks before to try to switch the Japs off on the right road to glory.

"He takes one good look, and reckons he's due to get off the plate; but the handicap was too small, and I outfooted him.

"'Whoa,' yells I, wrapping my hand into his coat collar. 'I'm the whole circus and needs a camel in the parade. You're due to fill that lovely animal's part.'

"'Unhand me, you intoxicated pest,' he gasps, as I lifted him up in the air and shook him until he grew as meek as Moses—or was it Saul?—was.

"'I shall protest to the authorities when I am liberated,' he gurgled, when he got his wind.

"'Not till I am married,' I answers, 'and then I won't be caring.'

"'Whoop-ee-ough-ow-ow,' I remarks, entering into the due festive spirit that should permeate a man's system when he's conducting his own wedding in a foreign land. Then I lets off my Colts a couple or three times, while people began to bar the doors and put up the window shutters.

"All but one little man, and as I wandered down the street in this joyous

fashion, shoving the wild-eyed missionary before me, I spotted that brave.

"'You'd better get your temerities out and put 'em on,' I percolates, stopping where he stood tranquilly leaning against a doorway.

"'I'm old Bill Slocum,' I remarked, flipping my gun handy-like, 'and I own Arizony and most of Mexico.' And then I shoves my cannon under his nose and asks, 'What's your name, pardner?' not by way of wanting information, but just for convenience in starting hostilities.

"'Nankipo,' he answers, without a sign of fight or white feather. I lowered my gun and stood open-mouthed and sizing him up. Nankipo—the sound sobered me in spots. So this clean-faced, genteel little feller with the sorrier eyes, was the thing that little girl up on the hill loved.

"'You're my meat,' I roars, 'come with me. I'll have you as chief mourner to watch my show, just to let you know you're not in the race any more.' I didn't exactly hate him, but just felt riled all over because de didn't give more respect to my hilarities.

"He put up a good fight, did that little man, but as I'm six foot one and he was five two, it didn't bother me much. I persuaded him to walk in front in the middle of the street by prodding him occasionally with the muzzle of my arbitrator, while all the inhabitants who hadn't previously disappeared, jumped into their holes like prairie dogs, waving their tails and barking in terror. The preacher man was really the most bother, as he would occasionally dig his heels in and try to take root, but his collar band held out.

"Up, up, up, we went, straight to my tea house on the hill, where the sun was shinin' down through the leaves and everything looked so homelike I forgot yearnin's for the range and everything except that this was my wedding. I was bubbling undiluted joy, and if I hadn't feared scaring Yum Chee, would have yelled for the full fun of it.

"'Yum Chee,' I opened, as she stood trembling before us, 'explain, elucidate, interpret, comprehendeez to this Nankipo that you're about to be married.'

Before I could head her off, she throws



DRAWN BY Y. SAYONARA

"Marry them in good American fashion."

herself, crying aloud in broken gasps, not at my feet, but Nankipo's. Regularly wraps both arms around his knees and turns her face up to where he stands, cool as ever, but with that murderous look in his steady face that I've seen on an Apache's when run down and rounded up by a band of rangers.

"There is things in this world sobers a fellow mighty quick, even if he's loaded to the lips with saki. All in a minute it comes to me.

"'Bill,' I says to myself, while it was so still only a robin out in the plum tree chirped away in sympathy with the sobbing little girl, 'Bill, you're a dirty dog. There ain't a decent breath in your body, nor a clean wrinkle in your skull. Don't break the heart of this pore little girl that's young enough to be your own. Arizony's where you belong. Be on the square, Bill.'

"I motions with the gun, to Nankipo, to lift her up, and tells the astonished sky-pilot to marry 'em good and strong in lasting American fashion. Then, while

he goes through his rigmarole, I fishes the deed out of my pocket, and across the back writes: 'Know all people in this here Japan, that in consideration of labor done I give this whole blooming teahouse and everything in it to Mrs. Nankipo, her that was Yum Chee. Bill Slocum.'

"I reckon I had most of old Mister Cupid's game skinned from the way them three acted. Nankipo kissed my hand on one side, the missionary tried to shake it off on the other, and Yum Chee's eyes was as full of tenderness, as if she had found Heaven.

"But the worst of all was when I started out of the door. Yum Chee came up, and, before I could draw my gun, reached up on tiptoes, and—well, she did anyway," Bill lamely and somewhat bashfully concluded.

"But what did you do then, Bill?" I asked, still unsatisfied.

"Me," said Bill, as he carefully wadded some freshly-cut plug into an ancient pipe, "more saki."

A Personally Conducted Courtship

BY UNA HUDSON

I've always had my suspicions of those people who go about prodding fat little boys in the ribs and tweaking the curls of strange little girls. It may be that they really are fond of children—certainly I don't presume to say that they are not, but I have my doubts. For my part, I regard children at their best as necessary evils, and at their worst as unmitigated nuisances.

Such being my convictions, my state of mind can perhaps be imagined when I received word that my sister Amy, lately married, had seen fit to increase the population by one.

Moreover, she had named her small son for me, and though I tried my hardest to appreciate the compliment, yet I very much wished she hadn't. For I understood that I would naturally be expected to take a certain proprietary interest in my namesake, and an apostle spoon or a loving-cup would be but the beginning of the things that might be expected of me later on.

However, I drew what consolation I could from the fact that the small Julius wasn't twins, and dispatched the apostle spoon, though heaven only knows what he could do with it.

I wrote to Amy, too, and not only refrained from expressing the hope that she would see fit not to repeat the indiscretion, but even achieved a few hypocritically pleasant remarks concerning the joy and delight of a baby in the house.

Amy's answering letter made me blush for my duplicity, she so evidently credited me with all the delightful characteristics I should have possessed but didn't.

A year later I received notification of the advent of "dear little Marjorie." I at once entered into negotiations for another apostle spoon, and, not wishing to show partiality, I included in my order a bread and milk set for Amy's first-born.

Thereafter I conscientiously remembered birthdays and Christmas, and even, when my nephew was old enough to appreciate the advantages of a "really, truly

letter," wrote to him at regular and stated intervals. All of which caused me to be referred to in Amy's household as "dear Uncle Julius who loves little children."

Though frequently pressed to do so, I refused to visit Amy. At a distance I could successfully live up to the reputation I had established for myself, but if brought into close contact with my nephew and niece I knew I must inevitably stand confessed that impostor that I was.

Julius had attained the mature age of six and Marjorie was five when I one day received a telegram from Amy. I've often wondered, but never dared ask, what Amy's husband said when he paid the freight on that telegram.

In it she explained at length and in detail just why they were called away at that particular time, also why it was impossible to take the children with them. In a number of long, involved—and expensive—sentences, she convinced me that I was the only person available for taking charge of said children. She made reference to her "trustworthy nurse" and her "treasure of a cook," and ended with a request that I take the first train for Seabright.

I took it, not because I wanted to, but because Amy's need was evidently urgent, and to have refused would have been but little short of brutal.

The hurried five minutes I had with Amy before her train pulled out, served but to bewilder me utterly. Her directions were so many, so varied and so conflicting that after a harrowing mental struggle in which I vainly tried to reconcile them the one with the other, I decided to leave Julius and Marjorie in the hands of Providence and the trustworthy nurse.

I will say of the first evening spent with my nephew and niece only that it was dull but peaceful. The succeeding day was neither the one nor the other.

To begin with, the trustworthy nurse,

probably as a convincing proof of her trustworthiness, fell downstairs and fractured her knee-cap. At her request I had her removed to the local hospital.

"I can stand them young torments," said she, "whin I'm about on me feet, but it's meself as wouldn't for worlds be flat on me back wid them rampagin' over the place."

I did not feel myself competent to hire another nurse, so decided to get along with such assistance as the cook might be able to give me.

She was a large, jovial person, who professed herself an authority on the care and management of children. "Thim nurses," said she, "is more for ornyment than use anyway. Childer is always hungry, the dears. Just feed them and they'll be after takin' care of themselves."

I was delighted with so simple and withal so reasonable a solution of the problem. "All right, Cook," said I. "Feed 'em."

And Cook fed them, not wisely, but too well, as was proven when Marjorie came to me, her small face twisted into a woful grimace, her plump hands clasped midway of her chubby person, and announced herself the victim of a "terr'ble tumic-a-ch'e." Julius, similarly afflicted, was discovered curled up in a corner of the parlor sofa.

I dosed them with hot ginger tea and ten drops of essence of peppermint in warm water, which remedies I thought I remembered to have been administered to me when, as a small boy, I partook too freely of unripe apples.

Their subsequent recovery might have been due to my ministrations, or it might have been caused by their fear of other and worse doses to follow. That they did recover was the all-important thing in my eyes, and I promptly decided for the future to make use of that ounce of pre-

vention that is popularly supposed to outweigh in value the pound of cure.

They objected strongly to oatmeal and milk for breakfast, bread and milk and apple sauce for dinner, and bread and milk without the apple sauce for tea, but I was firm, though I trust kind, and the objection was not sustained.

The second morning found my charges in the state that might be described either as "brimming over with animal spirits" or



DRAWN BY MAGINEL WRIGHT ENRIGHT

"The trustworthy nurse fell down stairs."

"full of the old Nick." Personally I prefer the latter, as being more expressive, even if less elegant.

After a goodly portion of the despised oatmeal and milk had been disposed of, I proposed that we spend the day out of doors. This, not because of any conviction that an out-of-doors life is good for children, but rather because I knew that Nature herself was capable of repair-

ing all ravages to the landscape, while for the damage we had already done indoors the services of other and more expensive craftsmen would be required.

Fortunately my proposal struck Julius and Marjorie as being just about the right thing, and they went whooping and yelling toward the orchard at the back of the house. I followed, carrying book and hammock. Not that I expected either to read or to nap, but I wished to be prepared in case there should come a lull in the exuberant spirits of Julius and his sister.

I swung the hammock between two apple trees, and stretched myself in it. Julius and Marjorie promptly swarmed over me, vociferously demanding a story. I agreed to the story, but would have protested when Julius seated himself flatly on my chest.

He assured me that he always "did it to Papa." So, as there seemed nothing more to be said, I suffered in silence save for an occasional involuntary grunt caused by his unexpected down-sittings and up-risings.

Marjorie, with unflattering candor, soon informed me that my story was "wery stoopid," and jumped down to gather flowers.

Julius, however, averred that it "would

do"—which I subsequently learned was his highest form of praise—and continued to sit upon my chest until I brought it to a close. Finding me firm in my refusal to tell another, he at length got down and began to help his sister collect weeds.

I am uncertain as to whether they mistook me for Ophelia or for the Queen of the May. Both those ladies, I believe, were given to the wearing of flowers in their flowing tresses. At any rate, Julius presently gathered a large sunflower and placed it just above my right ear. Marjorie followed with a handful of prickly things, which she explained would "stick where you haven't any hair." They brought other weeds and stuck them in my buttonholes and the meshes of my hammock. I watched them lazily, and presently the laughter of the children, the hum of the bees and the songs of the birds blended in one indistinguishable murmur, and I think I must have slept.

It was my nephew's voice that roused me. "There he is; that's him," he was saying, after the manner of the man who entreats you to "step right this way, ladies and gentlemen, and view the greatest curiosity of the age."

"He—he looks very nice, I'm sure." It was a girl who answered. Her voice held rather more than a hint of laughter, whereat I wondered a little, but it was so captivating, withal, that I resolved to wake up at once and make her acquaintance.

"He's our uncle," Julius explained, all the pride of ownership in his voice.

"And he's comded to take care of us while Mamma's away," supplemented Marjorie.

"And did he let you put all those flowers around him?" the girl asked. "I'm sure he must be very nice indeed, and very fond of little children."

Heavens! I had forgotten those confounded flowers. What an idiot I must look! No wonder she had wanted to laugh.

"Oh, he'll do." This from Julius. Then together he and Marjorie chorused: "Say, will you marry him, Miss Hanscom?"

It was so unexpected that I with difficulty suppressed a sudden violent start. I no longer had any wish to wake up and



DRAWN BY MABEL WRIGHT ENRIGHT

"The victim of 'a terr'ble tunic-ache.'"



DRAWN BY MAGINEL WRIGHT ENRIGHT

"He looks very nice, I'm sure."

make the young woman's acquaintance. It would be productive of altogether too much embarrassment for us both. But, curiosity impelling, I very cautiously opened one eye just so wide as prudence would permit. I almost instantly closed it again, but I had seen enough to make me wonder at Julius's willingness to resign so charming a lady to another. His next words enlightened me.

"He makes us eat oatmeal—"

"And bread and milk," chimed in Marjorie.

"And we don't like oatmeal—"

"And bread and milk."

"And so we thought that p'rhaps if you would marry him you could make him give us something else."

"I don't b'lieve uncles know much 'bout taking care of little girls," Marjorie con-

fided, "'cept they're married uncles. He's buttoned my frock under my chin 'stead of down my back, and my arms is all pulled skewy. Please, Miss Hanscom, won't you marry him?"

"You ridiculous children," Miss Hanscom was plainly endeavoring to suppress the amusement in her voice, "I couldn't possibly do that. You know, a lady cannot marry a gentleman unless he asks her to."

"Oh, that's all right," said the resourceful Julius. "I'll just wake him up, and then he can ask you."

There was a quick swish of skirts, and I judged that Julius was being forcibly restrained.

"You *mustn't* do that," gasped Miss Hanscom. "It wouldn't do at all."

"But," said Julius, artfully, "if he asked you to marry him, you wouldn't say 'no,' would you, Miss Hanscom?"

"Julius," said the lady severely, "if you ask your uncle to ask me to marry him, I most certainly shall say 'no.' Now, remember."

"Oh, the oatmeal and milk!" and, "Oh, my frocks buttoned down the front!" wailed Julius and Marjorie in concert.

"See, Marjorie," said Miss Hanscom, "I'll fix your frock for you right now, and, Julius, you may bring your uncle over for tea this afternoon. I think we can persuade him to let you have cookies and lemonade and maybe a dear little custard in a cup. You'd like that, wouldn't you, dear?"

"Y-e-s," admitted Julius, a trifle reluctantly. Afternoon tea, even with cookies, was but a tame substitute for his own more spectacular matrimonial plan.

"And remember," cautioned Miss Hanscom, "not a word to your uncle about all this nonsense, or I won't even let you have the cookies."

I lay quite still for some minutes after my ears had assured me that I was alone with the children. Then Marjorie came up and began to tickle my ear with a blade of grass. I rolled over and made an elaborate pretense at waking up.

"Hullo, Marjorie," said I. "Guess I must have been asleep. What have you and Julius been doing all this while?"

"Playing," returned Marjorie promptly

and unblushingly. But I saw her turn and grin at Julius, who grinned back. They said nothing, however, not even when, that afternoon, I carefully and painstakingly buttoned Marjorie's clean frock down the back. But their faces had a slightly conscious look, and I somehow received the impression that it is always safe to suppose that children know a great deal more than you think they do.

Miss Hanscom's tea was a huge success. I felt as does one who has come upon an unexpected oasis in a particularly unpleasant desert. As for Julius and Marjorie—they ate so many cookies and drank so much lemonade that I blushed for their manners and trembled for their digestions. I even ventured a hint as to a further consumption of peppermint and ginger tea in the near future, but Miss Hanscom laughed and assured me that cookies and lemonade were good for small people. And she asked us to come back and have some more on the following day.

Needless to say, we came. Indeed, I'm bound to confess that we construed Miss Hanscom's invitation as a standing one, and put in our appearance every afternoon with clock-like regularity.

And it wasn't long before I began to be unpleasantly conscious of the restraint imposed upon me by the constant presence of the children. There may be, and probably are, men who can make tender speeches and look the things they haven't the courage to say with a pair of round-eyed, inquisitive children in attendance, but I'm not one of them. Julius' solemn stare reduced me to a condition bordering on imbecility, and Marjorie's joyful little giggle, always with us and always inopportune, brought me to the verge of nervous prostration.

Finally, not because I wanted to, but because I saw no way of avoiding it, I took Julius into my confidence to the extent of intimating as delicately as I could that if, on the occasion of our next visit to Miss Hanscom, he and Marjorie would considerately withdraw from the room for a brief interval, I might later be able to present them with a new auntie.

Julius eyed me shrewdly. "You mean,"

said he, "that you're going to ask Miss Hanscom to marry you?"

Julius is remarkably direct. When he grows up he will undoubtedly always call a spade a spade, and get himself loathed by all his acquaintances.

I was obliged to admit that his surmise was correct.

"I'd like," said he, with engaging frankness, "to stay and see how you do it."

meal he has had since the rescue party overtook him. When he had consumed the greatest possible number of cookies in the least possible length of time, he seized Marjorie by the hand, and together they effected so noisy and conspicuous an exit that his hostess was constrained to ask him where he was going.

He very obligingly came back, and not only told her where, but also *why!* It was one of those exceedingly embarrassing



DRAWN BY MAGINAL WRIGHT ENRIGHT

"Their faces had a slightly conscious look."

"That cannot be," said I firmly, "for if you stay I shall not ask her."

Fortunately Julius recognizes the inevitable when he meets it. "All right," he said. And I knew he could be trusted to keep his word. But I wasn't altogether easy in my mind, for Julius' methods not infrequently leave much to be desired.

The next afternoon he fell upon the cooky plate in the manner of a starving arctic explorer partaking of the first square

moments that occur in the lives of all of us. I glared at Julius, and Miss Hanscom's pretty face took on the vivid hue of her neck ribbon. But she was equal to the occasion.

"Very well, Julius," she said sweetly, "you may go, for I intend to accept your uncle, and I couldn't possibly do it with you here."

Unsatisfied curiosity was writ large in every line of Julius' face.

"After all," I interposed, "don't you think it is perhaps just a little unfair to send Julius away now? It's been his own personally conducted courtship, and he ought to be permitted to see the finish."

"Oh!" said Miss Hanscom, "were you awake that day?"

"I was," I answered feelingly. "I did

"Bernice," I said desperately, "you're making a mistake, dear. I'm not fond of children at all." I looked at Julius, who seemed to have become all eyes and ears, and spoke my mind fully and freely. "I loathe them," I said.

Now, I have observed that if a woman is really determined to love a man, and



DRAWN BY MAGINEL WRIGHT ENRIGHT

"They effected a noisy and conspicuous exit."

not, while they were doing it, understand the reason for my floral adornment, but afterwards I, of course, realized that it had been done to render me pleasing in your eyes."

Bernice Hanscom laughed a little, as at an amusing recollection, but her eyes were tender. "I think," she said softly, "I loved you from the start. When I saw you lying there, with those burrs stuck in your hair, and that ridiculous sunflower bobbing about your ear, I knew you must be very fond of children and—"

I stifled a groan. It was terrible to confess my duplicity, but I couldn't let the dear girl marry me under a misapprehension like that.

can find no good reason for so doing, she will invent one.

Bernice came a step nearer me, her hands held out, her eyes shining.

"Really?" she said. "Then, you're a perfect angel to have treated them the way you have."

Verily, the race is not always to the swift, nor the prizes of life to the one who is most worthy.

Bernice was very close to me now, and I—

Well, if you are interested in further details I refer you to Julius. He afterwards gave his mother a remarkably comprehensive and accurate account of what "happened next."

The Fog and Francisca, also Penfield

BY WILBUR D. NESBIT

"But you are merely rubbing a rhetorical hair-restorer over a bald fact," asserted Francisca Doonberry.

Penfield Smith smiled feebly, yet stuck manfully to his guns.

"Now, Miss Francisca, when you say that when I say this street has an unusually attractive lot of bachelor girls I am simply concealing my real impression that it is liberally sprinkled with old maids you do me an injustice. You do, indeed."

"One can't do a man an injustice. One can't be too severe on men as a class," she answered, placing an ash-receiver beside Mr. Smith, who was sitting on the porch railing.

"No?"

"No. If men were as chivalrous and appreciative as you claim them to be, why is it that in this single block there are seven unengaged—and most of the time disengaged—young women?"

"Maybe the men don't know—"

"Is this an undiscovered country along here? Is it a *Terra Incognita* from the iron fence around the churchyard to the stone wall in front of the rich Higgins?"

"Full many a rose is born to—"

She stopped his quotation with a gesture that seemed one of ire.

"What if it is?" she asked. "Do you suppose it pleases the rose to blush unseen and be put into poetry because of that? Especially when the rose withers and dies without ever knowing anything about the poem? And the 'dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear' some jewels, too, which is one way of saying there are just as good fish in the sea as ever were caught."

"If it is an unknown country, one of these days some Christopher Columbus will sail into view."

"One of these days? In the meantime, we must sit here, like shipwrecked sailors, and wait and watch for a sail?"

Mr. Smith got down from the railing, drew himself up proudly, and asked:

"What sort of a Christopher Columbus would I make?"

"Oh, you?" Miss Doonberry looked

him over calmly. "Nobody ever would regard you as a Christopher Columbus. Besides, you are not discovering anything. I have had to point out this unknown land to you. I've had to take you by the hand"—he held out his hand, but she ignored it—"I have had to take you by the hand and lead you blindly through the shoals. You are merely a passive spectator—a calm, unsympathetic onlooker, an innocent bystander."

"And doesn't the innocent bystander always get hurt?"

"Not if he goes home at a reasonable hour. And you have been sitting on my front porch half the afternoon, to the wonder and dismay of all the other unoccupied girls on this block. Run along home now, like a good boy, and next time you want to offer consolation for the spinster peculiarities of this street, study up something more pleasant than 'bachelor girls.' Ugh! Bachelors smoke pipes and—and—and—"

"And play Christopher Columbus," he offered.

"From your standpoint."

"But I've been trying to—"

"My dear earnest, young friend, you are misguided. We want relief along this desert strand, but we do not want young men who amble into view with the self-conscious air of a relief committee in high hats and frock coats, bearing a basketful of tracts and resolutions, and who will read long speeches of high-sounding phrases before offering us the—the—"

"The meal tickets? Relief committees always do, you know."

"Well, I've heard of women who called their husbands their meal tickets, but we are not yet at that stage of starvation. In the meantime, as you must be going, you might bear us in mind, and if you see any likely young men, simply give them a casual hint that—"

"Do you know, it's mighty plucky of you to carry it all off as a joke."

"A joke? Carry it off! I like that!"

She handed him his hat, with a scant

"Good-afternoon," and hurried into the house while he took his way down the steps.

Nobody had ever satisfactorily explained why that one block on Hinkley avenue, between the church and "the rich Higginses" was so continually devoid of beaux. The church was an old and eminently respectable-looking building—just the sort of place for a wedding. It should have encouraged courtships; certainly it did not discourage them. "The rich Higginses" had made their money in a brewery or a soap factory or something, and did not even use the Hinkley avenue side of their grounds, so they had nothing to do with the case. But it was no matter for levity, this scarcity of young men of evenings.

Take Francisca Doonberry, for instance. Frankly red-haired, smart, with dark blue eyes and a soft, white complexion, she had the looks, the laughter and the language to attract and interest any discerning young man. Though she scornfully referred to herself as an "old maid," it must be said that she was only twenty-two, and that when she had been away at school she had been pursued by eager youths; one or two of them had even followed her to her home after she graduated. But the pall of Hinkley avenue fell upon them, according to Francisca, and they returned not. Honestly, she said "No" to them. Penfield Smith had not yet given her the opportunity to say "No" to him, but she was going to say it, she told herself; and almost told him in confidential moments. Once or twice she had urged him to pay his devoirs to the Jordan girls, who were statuesque brunettes, or to Florence Holbrook, an equally statuesque blonde, yet he had refused to do so. Really, young Smith deserves sympathy, for Francisca was gifted with that dangerous faculty, sarcasm—a very entertaining gift when we hear a woman exercise it on some other man, but not so alluring when turned upon ourselves. Still, Smith did not seem to mind, so why should we wax lachrymose over it?

We left Penfield Smith going down the Doonberry steps. It shall profit us noth-

ing to go along home with him and try to read his thoughts. He mused upon the manless condition of Hinkley avenue, but we know all about that. He mused about Miss Francisca's mystifying way of attracting him one moment and spurning him the next—but we cannot understand that any better than he could. Suffice it to say that he went to his home and had his dinner, as all well-mannered young men should do; and that after dinner he resumed thinking of Francisca, which was perfectly justifiable and after all no more than might have been expected. Under the latter classification, also, comes the fact that before he had quite finished his cigar he had determined to go to see Francisca that evening. On his way to Hinkley avenue, he concluded that it would be a delightful evening for a boat ride. That he was a good oarsman and always showed to the best advantage while pulling a boat need not necessarily shatter our appreciation of his kindness.

But, when he arrived at the Doonberry home and made his boat-ride suggestion, a new element entered into his calculations—and all but upset them. The new element was Mrs. Doonberry.

"No, Francisca," she said, "I do not believe you should go to the lake. The lake is treacherous. All water is treacherous. Every day or so I read of some Sunday-school excursion that has been wrecked, and—"

"This is not to be a Sunday-school ex—"

"Certainly not, Mr. Smith," interrupted Francisca, "but, like a dutiful daughter, I shall yield to my mother's superior reasoning powers. The lake is put off the map. If our nice porch has lost its charm for you, possibly you have some other suggestion to make."

"Francisca, do not be so—so—so—"

"I am not so-so, mamma. Mr. Smith will tell you that I am always exactly so when I say anything."

"Yes, indeed, Mrs. Doonberry."

"What I wanted to say, if you two have quite finished," went on Mrs. Doonberry, "is that Francisca should not be so sarcastic in her speech."

"Oh, Mrs. Doonberry," Smith answered, "she is not sarcastic."

"Not a bit of it," confirmed Francisca. "Now, make your suggestion, Mr. Smith."

"Well, if not a ride on the lake, then why not take the trolley down to Lincoln Park, and then have a boat ride in the lagoon?"

"Fine!" assented Francisca. "Mamma can't object to our going to Lincoln Park can you, mamma? She has so often said that Lincoln Park is an educative influence and an uplifting institution, haven't you, mamma? We'll feed peanuts to the elephant and look at the—"

"I'm sure the trolley ride will do you good," interrupted Mrs. Doonberry. "And the park should be beautiful to-night."

So they started for the park. By the time they reached Wilson avenue there was a perceptible heaviness in the atmosphere. The street lights began to glimmer dimly and the motorman kept clang-ing his gong.

"Must be a fire down in this neighbor-hood," said Smith.

"It's a fog," diagnosed Francisca. "Didn't you notice it creeping in from the lake away back there?"

"No. I hadn't been noticing anything except—"

"Oh, I saw it coming some time ago," she interrupted, having observed the way he had been studying her on the way in.

At the limits barns they changed to a Clark street cable car. Here the fog had become so thick that Francisca remarked that it would not be a bad idea for the car company to provide guides for folks who had to find their cars. They got off the cable car at one of the park entrances, and walked down the wide pathway.

The farther they got into the park, the thicker grew the fog. Crossing the western driveway, they were almost run down by a speeding auto, the lights of which could not even shed baleful gleams, so dense had the curtain of mist become. Almost by instinct they found their way to the path that led by the boathouse of the south lagoon, and continued along their course toward the high bridge. Francisca had expressed the opinion that it might be pleasant to climb the bridge and see how the lake looked when banked in by the fog, with the moonlight struggling to break through, and with perhaps a few

blinking steamer lights wavering like fire-flies in the haze.

"It will be a romantic scene," she said.

Just then they bumped against another couple. The man had his arm protect-ingly about the girl's waist and they were strolling idly, heedless of fog, or of the world about them—which, indeed, could not see or be seen.

"Here's a romantic scene right at hand," suggested Smith.

"I wonder who is responsible for the idea that romance consists entirely of silly actions?" was the tart reply.

Francisca took her hand from his arm, as if in fear that they, too, might be mis-taken for a romantic couple, and walked aside from him.

"You had better stay close to me," Smith warned her. "You might get lost in the fog."

Already she was assuming a blurred shape.

"The idea!" she said, and walked on, he following as well as he might. When he overtook the figure on which he had kept his eyes he laid his hand on its arm and said:

"Really, you should not run away like that. It is hardly safe—"

"Sir-r-r!" broke from the lips of the figure. "How dare you accost me?"

Penfield Smith, in dumb wonderment, drew nearer, and peered at the face of the girl. It was not Francisca!

"I beg your pardon," he murmured, lifting his hat and hurrying on, followed by a snappy:

"Well, I should think you would!"

He took a more rapid pace, and tried to find Francisca, who, he was sure, was on a little way ahead of him. He stopped two or three times when a shadow assumed shape, but each time it was not Francisca. Once it was an Italian woman carrying some kind of a pack on her head, again it was a lady of color, who threatened to scream when he touched her arm timidly, and who yelled:

"Take yo' han' off'n me, white pus-son!"

The friendly fog aided his escape, but at the same time it foiled his efforts to locate Francisca. It seemed to him that he had felt his way for a mile or two, and

still no sign of the girl. The situation grew worrisome. What would Mrs. Doonberry say? What would Francisca say, granting that she would ever be in a state of forgiveness permitting her to speak to him, if he failed to find her and to bring her safely home? Off to one side he descried a dark shape, evidently seated on a bench. Possibly it was she; she might have decided that it would be wisest to wait for him. He approached the figure.

"I beg your pardon," he said, suavely, "but is this——"

"You're under arrest," came a gruff reply, and a star flashed murkily on the shape. "You're the fellow that's been tryin' to flirt wit'——"

This time he ran, and the fog again was his friend, but still was his foe, for while it hid him from the policeman it also hid Francisca from him. As he slowed up, he thought rapidly of the situation. What was to be done? What could he—Ouch! He went headlong over the base of a statue. Picking himself up, he groped his way to the steps of the pedestal and sat down, to meditate more fully upon his plight. Where was he? He was like the Indian who said he was not lost but his wigwam was. He was right there, but where? Through the fog came the aggravating barks of the seals and the petulant growlings of the lions and tigers. Once the big elephant trumpeted nervously away off somewhere, and there was a constant undertone of chattering and bickering from the wondering monkeys, who never could grow accustomed to the fogs which shut off the glare of the electric light. But whether these growls, trumpetings and chATTERINGS came from before, behind, above or from the right or left, he could not tell.

And where was Francisca?

"I must find her," he told himself. Doubtless she was by this time as thoroughly lost as he; possibly she was hysterical from fright.

"Miss Doonberry!" he called, hoping that if she were in the vicinity she would answer.

"Miss Doonberry!" No response. "Miss Doonberry!"

There was a note of despair in the emphasis with which he shouted the name.

"Has anybody seen Miss *Doonberry*?" This came in a mocking voice from some unrecognizable direction.

"If anybody sees Miss *Doonberry*, tell her her *huckleberry* has called," piped a shrill voice from another side.

There were others who could not find their way. They were waiting patiently for the fog to lift. Into their trouble came the tribulations of Penfield Smith, out of which they could wring some pleasure. The cry of "Miss *Doonberry*!" was taken up in a hundred voices and was sent rollicking back and forth through the clammy haze. Smith sank into silence instantly. The taunters tired of calling for her, and again there was a comparative stillness. Through this there wailed:

"Here I am!"

Smith leaped to his feet, but simultaneously there leaped from a thousand throats, it seemed, the cry:

"Here she is!"

Puzzled, believing that some joker had simulated a girl's voice to have sport with him, Smith dropped to the stone again. Out of the fog there now came chuckles and suggestive smacks, implying a reunion of tender hearts. Smith boiled with rage.

"They can have all the fun they like with me," he growled, "but it's mighty ruffianly to make such sport of *her*."

Straining his ears and eyes, he continued to gaze into the grayness about him. Once more there came a mournful call of:

"Here I am!"

"Is that you, Francisca?" he called, rising and looking this way and that.

"Is that you, Francisca?" mocked the voices once more.

"Francesca da Rimini, Paola calls!" shouted a voice, evidently hoarsened by college yells.

"Find Francisca and get the box of cigars!" came another shout.

"Francisca, the wires is crossed," explained still another voice.

"Where are you, Francisca?" Smith desperately cried.

"Over here," was the answer, in which there were tears.

"Over there, over there!

I shall meet you,

I shall greet you

Over there!"

was chanted all about, and derisive peals of laughter accompanied the singing.

"Over where?" Smith called.

"I don't know!"

"Did you get a round trip ticket?" asked a hidden tormentor.

But Smith was running in the direction from which he thought her voice sounded. He bumped into people, he tripped over chains, he sprawled in the grass once or twice, and once he tore his way through some shrubbery, but he minded none of these hindrances. Yet, after a little while of this, the thought came to him that for all he knew he was running away from instead of toward her. He stopped again. Within a foot of him was a park bench. Gladly he sat down, dropped his head in his hands and pondered the problem before him. People were passing and repassing along the graveled path in front of him. He could not see them, but he could hear the doubt that was in their footsteps. Possibly Francisca was one of those who wandered aimlessly so near him. But if he called to her it would only evoke that maddening chorus from the crowd scattered in the vicinity. One weary person hesitated before him, then stepped softly across the grass and sat on the end of the bench farthest from him. The person sighed—a worn, disheartened sigh. No doubt, he mused, this person also was searching for some one. But he had his own troubles. The case was really growing serious. He would call for her again, let the ill-bred crowd roar as it might.

"Miss Doonberry!"

Again the shrieks from the fog-bound hearers. Again the roars and yells of laughter, the sarcastic queries, the caustic comments. But—

"Here I am!"

The whisper came from the person on the bench with him. He sprang to her side and grasped her hands.

"At last I have found you!" he gasped.

"It looks to me as if I had found you," she replied, loosening her hands.

"Come. Let us go on home."

"What?" she asked; "go through that crowd of rude, heartless people who have been—Oh, it is simply—"

She could not finish because of her sobs.

Smith's arm went about her shoulders and he essayed to comfort her by telling her that it didn't amount to anything.

"Doesn't amount to anything?" she exclaimed. "Doesn't it amount to anything to have everybody in the park shouting your name and laughing about you? How would you have liked it?"

She began to shake with sobs again, and again his arm went across her shoulders, but now she angrily shook it away.

"Take me home," she demanded.

"That's just what I wanted to do a moment ago," he retorted, nettled by her wrath, which seemed to him purposeless and uncalled for.

"If you had kept beside me, this—this awfully embarrassing affair would not have happened."

"How could I keep beside you when—Oh, I'll not argue with you," he replied. "The thing to do is to find the way out of here. If I only could see a policeman."

He shivered, recalling his encounter with the officer a short time before.

"And have him ask if I am Miss Doonberry?" she said, crisply. "No. We'll find our way out of here by ourselves. Come. Will you be kind enough to start?"

"Certainly"—stiffly—"if I can decide which way to start."

"We'll start in any direction. Surely we'll come across some landmark that will help us out."

Smith remained silent. Francisca took his arm and they started boldly and blindly down the path. Soon she resumed her remarks on the subject of his remissness in not clinging to her in the first place and his foolishness in calling for her so loudly in the second place. He defended himself as well as he could, not having assimilated the great lesson that when a woman has convinced herself that a man is in the wrong there is no use in trying to appeal the case. Suddenly Smith stopped and looked vaguely about him.

"What is it now?" she demanded.

"We are lost again."

"Again? How can we be lost before we have found ourselves?"

"I mean I have been so greatly interested in what you were saying that we have wandered off that path."

"I'm glad, anyway, that you are willing to take the blame this time. If you——"

"But what we must do now is find that path."

Bravely they sought the walk, but it was not to be found. Over the grass they went, getting tangled in shrubbery and repeating Smith's earlier acts of colliding with trees and chain fences.

"Boo-oo-o-oo! Boo-oo-oo-o-oo!"

A weird, rasping roar surged to them through the mist.

"Oh, what can that be?" Francisca cried, clasping his arm timidly.

"Boo-oo-o-oo-o-oo-o!"

"Are the animals——" She shuddered and clung all the more tightly to him.

"It's a foghorn," he explained.

"Much good it does us."

She released his arm, but immediately clutched it again, remembering the disastrous result of becoming separated from him. They plodded on. A scramble through some small bushes was stopped by a voice which demanded:

"Where are you going there?"

"We're trying to get out of the park," Smith answered.

"You're walkin' to the lake," said the voice, evidently that of an officer. "Turn back and go the other way and you're all right."

Back they went, or so they thought. But what with dodging unexpected barriers and feeling their way through whole forests of interfering trees, they were soon as thoroughly lost as ever. Now they settled down to a silent, intense, deliberate promenade. They would walk and walk and walk until they found a path that would lead them somewhere—anywhere. Once more Smith stopped.

"Here's a little bit of a footpath," he said, stooping to examine the ground before them. "Evidently it is a short cut of some kind through some part of the park. You keep to it, and I'll walk in the grass alongside. This path must connect with one of the drives or something like that. We'll follow it to the bitter end."

It was easier walking for Francisca's tired feet on the little path, and they made better progress. Still, so far as results went, they might as well have been going blindly across the grass. The little path

was one of crooks and turnings, of sudden angles and of many obstacles. Once Francisca did not discover that she had missed it until they were well into the grass again; then in wild alarm she announced that she was off the path, and Smith had to think of all the Indian woodcraft he ever had read of to locate it again.

So they walked and they walked and they walked, until it seemed to Francisca that she was a mechanical doll of some sort. And the obstacles in the path grew, it seemed to her, greater and more numerous. Several times she tripped and would have fallen but for Smith's ready arm. Once, and once only, did he again offer the suggestion that he shout for some one to come and pilot them to safety. Weary as she was, she summoned enough scorn to her tones to convince him that lifting his voice above a whisper would almost be an affront.

"We ought surely to be getting somewhere before long," Smith grumbled. "I know we've walked twenty miles."

"I just wonder who made this path and what he uses it for," Francisca commented. "He must have been—Oh!"

She stumbled to her knees. Smith bent to assist her to arise, but something on the path caught his eye and he loosed his hold of her arms, to begin laughing immoderately.

"Why, Mr. Smith! What in the world is it?"

Again he laughed. She knew by the breathless way he chuckled that tears must be rolling down his cheeks. Insanity! Fearful memories of incidents of people whose brains had suddenly given way under tremendous strain flashed through her mind. Alone—practically; lost; hidden in a dense fog! And with a madman! She dropped her face in her hands, as she knelt there, and wept afresh.

Smith's laughter ceased on the instant, and he begged her to get on her feet.

"It—ha, ha—it is so funny!" he said.

"Funny?" she repeated, gently, bearing in mind the theory that one must seem to agree with insane persons. "Funny? Yes, indeed. Isn't it, though? I never knew anything so funny."

Really, she succeeded in forcing a very fair sort of a laugh.

"But you don't understand," he told her, and began laughing again.

"I know I don't," she answered, soothingly, as one would speak to a child. "I know I don't. Won't you explain it to me? You do explain things so beautifully."

"It's the best joke!"

"Oh, splendid!"

"If we aren't a precious pair of fools!"

"Fools! I want to know—Oh, yes, certainly we are a precious pair of fools. Certainly we are."

"To think that we have been walking on this path all this while, when we might have—"

"Yes, yes. When we might have been walking on the lake. Is that it? Isn't it funny? Oh, Penfield, you are so witty!" She could see his face smoothing out as the laugh left it, and this convinced her that her policy of agreeing with him was giving her control of the situation. "You always could think of the brightest things!"

"Walking on the lake?" he cried. "Who wants to walk on the lake?"

"Why, don't you want to? All right, Penfield. Then let us keep right along this nice little path."

"Do you know what this nice little path is?"

"Yes, yes. Of course. It is the—"

"It is the baseball diamond!"

"And we—" She gaped at him blankly.

"And we have been rambling around and around it, and you have been stumbling over the bags that mark the bases!"

For a time she stood stockstill, too dumfounded to think of anything to say or do. Then:

"I wouldn't feel hurt about it a bit if you hadn't made me think you had gone crazy!"

He took her arm without a word, turned her about and set forth once more.

"But where are we going now?"

"Right across second base, through the outfield, across the boulevard, out to North avenue, onto the cars and home."

It happened as he prophesied. He had got his bearings when he discovered that they were on the ball grounds, and it took the plainest of dead reckoning to fetch them to the street, then over to the corner to wait for the car.

"And to think of how everybody will be reminding me of how my name was shouted back and forth across Lincoln Park!" she sighed. Her voice had lost its sarcastic tinge. "I begin to dislike the name of Doonberry. I expect to dream of thousands of people shouting '*Miss Doonberry!*' across an impenetrable chaos of mist. Oh, why did you yell so?"

Smith came closer to her, slipped his arm about her and murmured:

"Because, if I hadn't found you I should have been lost in a fog all the rest of my life."

"And shouting '*Miss Doonberry!*'"

"Exactly. And if you are going to dislike the name, it will be so easy to change it to 'Smith,' which can be yelled by half of humanity without attracting more than one response from the other half."

Presumably she blushed. That could not be seen. At any rate she hung her head, as a coy maiden should; then turned slowly and said:

"I did not think you would be Christopher Columbus, but you—"

She did not say "Yes"; she did not say "No." But she told Penfield Smith he mustn't.

"It's foggy; nobody can see," he said. And he did.

Her Royal Highness

BY CONSTANCE MORRIS

Edgerton, strolling leisurely through the corridor of the big hotel, looked in on the brilliantly-lighted dining-room through a long sheen of glass. The breath of the soft spring night, entering through the open windows, fanned the flame of the candles under their red, silken-flounced shades, and wafted to him the fragrance of the flowers on the snow-white tables a-glitter with silver and crystal.

Here and there he recognized, above their broad shirt fronts, old friends and confrères of his father, who would, he knew, be glad to see him after his prolonged absence; and he speculated as to how many more years it would be before his appetite for the mild adventure to be found in foreign travel would be satiated, and he would be willing to settle down in the home of his ancestors.

He paused a moment, watching the dazzling scene. Here were diners representing nearly every large city of the world. Some were giving the dinner for the sake of their fair guests, and some were dining selfishly for the dinner alone. There were lovely women in satin and gorgeous gems, with conscious half-grown under-graduates up from Harvard and Yale. A company promoter with blatant laugh was entertaining a possible subscriber, and next to them, all aware of the attention she was attracting, was a famous prima-donna of the music halls, whose blonde beauty was alone well worth the two dollars one paid to see and hear her.

Edgerton half turned to give his hat to the man at the door, and then he brought himself abruptly to a halt. For there, not five paces away, sat the girl of Paris, of Baden, of the *Kaiser-Wilhelm*. His heart pounded mightily against his side; and so he stood transfixed, unmindful of all else save that she was again before him.

She was not of a type which carried observers by assault. She had that cold, fine air of thorough breeding, which was more strongly in evidence than any beauty of her face or figure. Her hair was

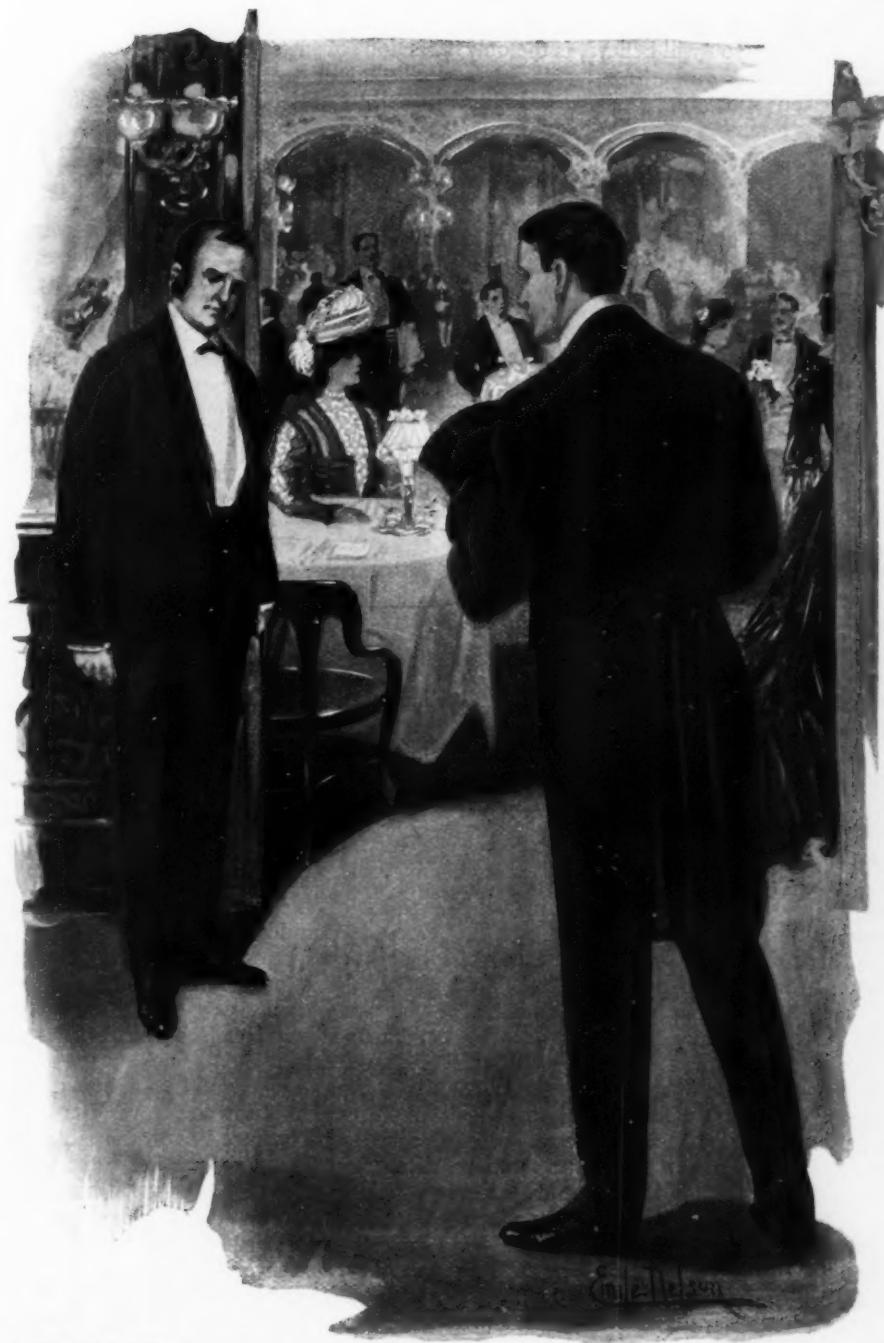
parted on the side and lay straight across her forehead like a lad's; her eyes were a clear gray, and looked out steadfastly and calmly from under heavily fringed lids. But Edgerton rejoiced most in her mouth, so straight, so firm, with the under lip perhaps a trifle heavy for perfect beauty, but speaking unmistakably of race and distinction. For six weeks he had followed this young woman. He had seen her first at Marienbad, later at Baden, and then in Paris, but had found her always unapproachable, placed by social convention upon a pedestal and accompanied by an *entourage*, like a young duchess. He could find no one among his acquaintances abroad who knew her, and as the days sped and the introduction he craved was delayed, her charm for him increased.

Then he found himself ship-bound with her, but her name told him nothing, and he caught sight of her but once during the six days' voyage.

Now again she was near him; the exquisite embodiment of all the dreams of his later years. He recognized her at once—her easy bearing, which belonged to no other woman, her flawlessly-cut tailor gown, the enormous pearls in her ears—and his blood raced to his brain in ecstasy at her nearness.

As he stood looking at her in sheer contentment, he saw the head-waiter approach her with deferential courtesy, and he saw too the look of dismay and surprise on her face as she turned to answer him. When he had moved away, the girl rose involuntarily, and then sat down again, glancing about her uneasily. Her eyes turned with a bewildered air toward the door, and at the sight of Edgerton's face her own flushed. She hesitated, and then bowed slightly. Wonderingly Edgerton returned the bow, and answering the appeal in her eyes walked over to her table with its heavy white linen and stamped silver.

"Monsieur," she said hurriedly, "I have just been informed by the *maître d' hotel*



DRAWN BY EMILE NELSON

"There sat the girl of Paris, of Baden, of the Kaiser-Wilhelm."

that ladies do not dine here unaccompanied by a gentleman. I am in deep distress; that, you will believe, is the only excuse for a recognition from me."

Edgerton took the chair the waiter placed for him, and looked at the girl, who sat facing him with a troubled smile and an air of being apart from and above her surroundings.

"I shall be glad, Mademoiselle, if you will treat me as a friend, and if I can be of service to you."

She straightened herself consciously, and again she glanced nervously towards the door.

"Thank you, Monsieur," she answered. Her English was perfect, save for a slight accent, whether German or French, Edgerton had not decided.

"I did an unconventional thing in coming here," she began. "I am not"—she hesitated a moment—"I am not in the habit of entering public dining-rooms alone, and therefore am not conversant with the customs of your American hotels. I—"

"I trust," interrupted Edgerton, lightly, while his pulses throbbed, and he struggled against the impulse to tell her then and there that nothing she could do would be an unconventional thing, "you will not treat me as a stranger. Remember for six days I have lived near you, with but a few partitions between us."

The girl surveyed his face critically. Edgerton did not move, but returned her gaze steadily.

"Mr. Edgerton"—at his quick look of inquiry she interjected, "I could not live for six days with but a few partitions between us without learning your name—there is something I have come all the way across the ocean for, accompanied only by servants, without the knowledge of my people and without the advice of my friends. I am in a strange country, Mr. Edgerton, and I am a girl and alone."

"Mademoiselle," said Richard Edgerton, and he leaned across the table, his shoulders square and his eyes grave, "the hotel we sit in to-night is named after my grandfather, and over there," he nodded out on the ever-changing avenue, "is the house in which I was born, my father was born, and his father before him." Edger-

ton raised his head and looked carefully around. "There," he bowed in the direction of a distinguished-looking man with hair slightly gray, sitting a few tables away, "sits the British Ambassador, who has known me since a lad."

The girl's face flushed, and she gave him a quick look.

"Thank you," she said simply. "I trust you. As I told you, I have come a great distance for a certain object—that object is a bundle of letters. Because I do not trust the man who is bringing them, I chose this public place, thinking its very publicity would shorten the interview, which to me"—she paused and cleared her throat, and caught the corner of her lip between her teeth—"is very bitter."

"I can well believe it," answered Edgerton. Something in his grim tones arrested her attention, and her beautiful face flamed red.

"The letters, Monsieur, are not mine," she said, haughtily.

"I beg your pardon," Edgerton answered, contritely.

"And when," she continued, "I was informed I could not wait here, and realized that I would miss the appointment, which would mean a renewal of communication with a man I could not even meet as an—well, I did a bold thing, but I am sure not a foolish one."

"Mademoiselle," and Edgerton bowed, "since you have done me the honor to make your affairs mine, you will answer me one question?"

"Proceed, Monsieur," replied the girl.

"If the letters are not yours, why have you come all the way from Bohemia for them? It was in Bohemia I saw you first, Mademoiselle."

The girl looked at him sharply. She had drawn off her white gloves, her hands were clasped before her on the table, and Edgerton could see where the large emerald she wore had cut into her finger.

"Mr. Edgerton," she asked fiercely, "have you ever suffered danger and pain for those you love?" She raised her head with pride, and her full under lip trembled slightly. "I am suffering both now, for one whose malformation of soul I have taken on my own; for one who but a few months ago left all her frailty behind,

and whose future I am going to save."

Edgerton's attention had been caught by a man dressed in somber black, with smooth-shaven face and white hair, who had been sitting in the large corridor, but who now looked thoughtfully and anxiously at the girl as he walked at intervals along its marble length.

"Do not look now," said Edgerton, "but I think that foreign-looking gentleman is watching you."

"Oh, Helmholtz," answered the girl, easily, "he is my servant."

"So?" observed Edgerton, and he glanced at the girl keenly. "I don't want to intrude upon a private trouble, and I can well believe it is painful to you, but don't act on impulse. Young ladies"—and he smiled quizzically upon the stern young face opposite his—"who travel with servants who look like prime ministers surely have families who should concern themselves in an affair which seems of such moment to one of them."

"That is just it," she answered, excitedly; "they must not know. They think I am traveling in the Carpathians, and were it not for Helmholtz I could not have arranged it at all."

She gave a quick start, her face became set and very white, and in her gaze was a look of contempt as it rested on a slight, dark man with wary, brilliant eyes, jet mustache, and a sword-cut across his left temple, who was making his way quickly toward her.

"D'Ornano!" exclaimed Edgerton, breathlessly. "By Jove! D'Ornano!"

He arose slowly, and there flitted across his shaven mouth a vague smile. He bowed politely, and met D'Ornano's look of surprise with one of calm interest.

"Ah, D'Ornano, we still exist," he said; and then, reseating himself, "Sit down, won't you?"

The man bowed ceremoniously to the young girl, but stood erect and rigid, awaiting her permission. She looked at him, but as if she saw him from a great distance, and inclined her head gravely.

"I had not expected a third to our interview," said the Italian, slowly and uncertainly, taking the chair that had been offered him.

Edgerton raised his eyes from the ob-

servation of his finger-tips, as they rested on the table before him, and looked at D'Ornano with a deprecating smile.

"No, you did not expect. Quite so. There will be many things come to you in your life you do not expect, D'Ornano."

The Italian pressed his lips closely together, and drew his eyebrows into the shape of a V. "If you are in this too—" he began, insolently.

"Oh, I wouldn't say that if I were you." Edgerton's voice had grown dangerously quiet, cold and metallic.

The young woman glanced from one to the other during the perplexing silence with a curious, puzzled expression. There was a gleam of anxiety and fear in the Italian's eyes, despite his swaggering air.

Edgerton looked at the girl with deliberate intentness, questioning. Something about his meaning glance made her breathe more rapidly. This young American! He was so cool, so well-bred, so astute.

"D'Ornano," he said, "when you arranged this little *parti-a-deux*, you were, perhaps, not aware of the honor Mademoiselle was conferring in giving you an appointment at all."

D'Ornano bowed across the table to the young girl, respectfully.

"I have received nothing but kindness at the hands of Her Royal Highness."

Her Royal Highness! Edgerton drew a deep intake of air, and murmured softly under his breath: "Her Royal Highness!" while his heart sang with triumph and the title beat rhythmically to every throb of his brain, filling it with wonder and amaze that he had not before guessed in her unapproachableness, in the indefinable signs of her bearing, in the unsurmountable incidents of the past weeks, that she was not as others, this young girl, but a thing apart, so flawless, so fine.

"Her Royal Highness!" Of course. How stupid he had been! How blind! It was as if a curtain had been suddenly lifted and the lights turned up. The players in the center of the stage stood out sharp and clear under the calcium of recollection, and in the background were revealed mistily the other characters in the little drama.

He counted back the years—twelve of



DRAWN BY EMILE NELSON

"D'Ornano glared at both savagely from under his lowered brows."

them—since when, scarcely more than a lad, he was an under secretary at the Imperial Court; and had fallen in love

even then with the slender, dignified child of ten in short frocks, with two golden braids reaching below her supple little waist.

In this light D'Ornano's part in the play was easy enough to interpret. He had been enacting these rôles ever since Edgerton first heard of him.

But, though a concourse of events raced through his memory, he sat very still, and not a muscle of his face moved.

"Just so," he answered, imperturbably; in a soft, careless drawl, "you have received nothing but kindness at the hands of Her Royal Highness." He smiled confidently at the girl who sat as carven stone and watched the two men with silent intentness.

"And because," his voice now grew businesslike with the cool consideration of an interested counselor, "you have received nothing but kindness at Her Highness's hands, you are going to *give* to her the letters you brought here to-night; and because I do not believe in your system of *chantage* you are going to hand them to her without the sum of"—he leaned across the table and looked at her earnestly. "I believe you said the sum was—"

"Four thousand pounds," she answered, faintly.

"Ah, yes, four thousand pounds," Edgerton continued, calmly.

D'Ornano glared at both, savagely, from under his lowered brows.

"It was not my humor to sell then, but three months ago the writer of these letters offered me as much, and in some quarters"—his face changed to one of sharpness and evil cunning—"in some quarters they are worth even more than that, but"—he shrugged his raised shoulders, slightly, and again bowed cynically to the girl, who sat so still with her virile, haughty face—"because Her Royal Highness has done me the honor to come a long distance for them, they are hers for the price I have named."

Edgerton drew his lips together tightly. His voice was lowered to a polite monotone and he spoke with quiet deliberation:

"As you say, Her Royal Highness has come a long distance, so you are going to *give* them to her."

"And I tell you, Monsieur," D'Ornano's utterance rose shrill and desperate above the subdued chorus of many voices, and his ringed fingers closed and opened with

excitement, "the last time I met Her Highness's mother, she—"

"Oh, don't, don't," interrupted the girl, in an odd, husky voice.

Edgerton turned to the man with a sudden movement, and uttered a sharp exclamation. Then, recalling himself, he reached across the table and laid his strong hand gently for a minute over the young woman's slender one, where it rested on the spotless damask. She was trembling slightly, and the white hyacinths in the silvered vase just touching her hair were not whiter than her cheeks. The square-jawed American and the sleek Italian noble faced each other.

"D'Ornano!" Edgerton regarded him with a steely, searching gaze. He had thrown off his air of affected carelessness, and his voice came quite calm, but intense and cold. "The history of your life is written on the blotters of the secret service throughout the courts of Europe. Your only safety heretofore has been in the illustrious names of your dupes and in your own famous one. But this time you have overreached yourself. Her Royal Highness's mother—" D'Ornano threw back his head and laughed, sneeringly. "Her Royal Highness's mother," repeated Edgerton, knitting his brows, has made a marriage which effectually breaks off the contemplated alliance with the house of Stoltzburg. She is no more now than any lady of noble birth, and consequently your letters are valueless. As for the other quarter you speak of, Her Royal Highness's mother receives a gratuitous income from her father, who, if you will stop to think, cares little had you fifty such packages to sell. Three months ago, I grant you, they were worth to Her Royal Highness's mother half her income, but since her"—he hesitated in pity for the girl.

"*Mésalliance*," she whispered, with deliberate dignity.

"You splendid woman!" thought Edgerton. "Exactly," he continued—"mésalliance. Well, they are worth nothing, now."

"Worth nothing," sneered D'Ornano, and he smiled derisively, his lips curling backwards at the ends like a fretful cur's, "perhaps then Mr. Edgerton will be so

kind as to tell me, if worthless, why Her Royal Highness made the appointment at all?"

"Because," returned Edgerton grimly, "it is her desire. And because she has risked danger in coming for such worthless things, you are going to *give* them to her."

He paused for a moment and looked away across the room. Then turning decisively to the craven face opposite his, he continued:

"You are going to *give* them to her, I repeat, because you are a coward who tries to levy blackmail on women and because there are so few countries in Europe where you can even hope to be received."

D'Ornano moistened his lips with his tongue, and one could see that the wound over his left temple beat furiously. His eyes quailed before Edgerton's.

"That is not true," he said, sullenly.

"No?" queried Edgerton. "Not two tables away sits the Ambassador who sat as judge and listened to the story that drove you out of the clubs of London and Paris. Your knowledge is dangerous to the Russian court, and your experiences are so well known at the German that you have been warned not to venture there again. At the Italian court you did not even give your enemy opportunity to see his murderer."

"It is a lie, a lie," broke in D'Ornano, hoarsely, "I struck in self-defense."

"There is not a country of importance, outside of America," went on Edgerton, as if he had not heard the interruption, "where you can live, nor will you be safe here unless you return at once to Her Royal Highness the letters written by her mother, the Princess Sophia. You know me; there are few clubs in New York that do not count my father a charter member, and on whose list I have not been enrolled since a boy. There are few courts of Europe where I have not served either as attaché or secretary for my country. Whose word will be believed—Richard Edgerton's, gentleman, or Louis D'Ornano's, *chevalier d'industrie*? Now, give to Her Royal Highness the letters."

D'Ornano sat silent, his chin inclined slightly on his breast, his teeth closed

tightly on his under lip; he stared passionately over the heads of the people out into the night.

"The Archduchess is waiting," said Edgerton, and his voice rang like steel which rasps on iron inadvertently.

D'Ornano reached his hand into his breast pocket and drew out a book-shaped leather case. He snapped back the sapphire clasp and took out the contents—a package of letters. They were bound loosely with a rubber band, and Edgerton recognized the crest of the former Princess of the House of Saxe-Meinrad.

He laid these silently before the girl. A group of army officers, their faces flushed with Burgundy, noisily arose, and amidst the babble of stimulated voices, D'Ornano got to his feet. He turned to the girl, bowed low with a dignity no less than her own, laughed mirthlessly, and walked from the room.

She looked into the corridor for the figure of the elderly man with the clean-shaven face, and then rose resolutely.

"It is over," she said, with a great sigh of relief.

The fineness of her beauty, the easy, perfect grace of her carriage, made an opening instantly for her among the theater parties of men in evening dress and women in spangled gowns and delicate wraps that stood about the door.

The corridors were becoming deserted. She stepped into a dimly-lighted room, whose walls were decked with oriental hangings.

Softly, in the small balcony outside, an orchestra played the Rhapsodie Hongroise, the notes soaring, then pausing, thrilling and pulsating to the beatings of Edgerton's heart.

She turned to him, her lips trembling. She came near him and laid a hand on his arm.

"I couldn't thank you there for the service you have just done me; I don't see that I can do it any the easier here."

Edgerton ignored her last words; he put out his hand for a minute and held it over hers; his eyes were shining and his voice was curiously sweet.

"Will you sit here?"

"Yes," answered the girl, tremulously.

"Your Royal Highness—what is your name, your Royal Highness?"

"Charlotte Elizabeth Sophia Louise," she replied, plaintively.

Yes, he remembered now. The Little Archduchess Charlotte, she had been called.

"Charlotte Elizabeth," Edgerton's compelling eyes never left her clear blue ones; "do you know how many weeks I have seen you?"

She squared her lovely shoulders and glanced at him whimsically, and then nodded her blonde head twice, silently.

"Oh, you do?" laughed Edgerton, gayly. "And how many, pray?"

"Six weeks," said the girl quickly and proudly, with her eyebrows raised while the hot blood flew to her cheeks, and there came to her face a look of sudden sweetness and great happiness.

The violins were flooding the warm air with their soft melody.

They sat under a majestic silk-threaded canopy of olive green, gold-starred. Delicately wrought chains of linked iron caught here and there the heavy folds. Against the faded colors of the Persian rugs that covered the wall hung swords of Malamocco, dented and twisted. Scimitars from Tunis or Algiers, spears from Archivis and ancient bronze firearms of Morocco penetrated and held to the walls turbans curiously woven in the exquisite dull colors of the far East. Above, a soft



DRAWN BY EMILE NELSON

"To the man, it was the paramount moment."

red light glowed through the iron lattice of a Byzantine lamp. Curtains hanging on either side of the canopy were heavily laden with gold crescents, and a great gold star and crescent, that insignia of the Orient, caught the *tuoturquo* that hung over all.

They might have been in Tangier, so completely were they hidden from the outside world.

He bent his head slightly; his voice was deliberate, but intense and earnest.

"It is a great presumption to dare to

ask you to listen to me at all, but I dare all things because I love you. I love you so that everything which is not worthy is hateful to me. I used to think I knew what love meant—I used to think love was found in companionship, and could not be unless tender speeches were exchanged and vows made, and that it needed caresses to live on. I now know that when one truly cares it means all one's life. Until to-night you have given me nothing; not a word, not a look, and yet, since I have seen you, I have been madly happy in just knowing that you live. I have been supremely content in just knowing I could look at you from day to day. It was because I recognized you as the one woman in all the world for me that I have held you apart and above all others."

He leaned forward and crushed his hands together, where they rested on his knee.

"I have loved you with all my heart and soul, always, always, from the first moment I saw you on the steps of the hotel at Marienbad. Charlotte Elizabeth, Princess of the Blood, Archduchess of the House of Austria, Princess in Toscany, Duchess in Styria, I love you. Will you be my wife?"

The girl sat motionless, her face pale and her hair gleaming in the changing glow of the dull red light. She raised her head, as if she were listening to a voice coming from a long distance.

"I care not one jot for all your titles. Are you not the same as any of those beautiful young girls we have just left? Ah! but not the same, because you are the woman I love. You will not think me boastful when I say"—Edgerton paused, and then went on humbly—"when I say there are few larger incomes to-day than mine. There is nothing in the world you have ever had that I cannot give you; and there will be one thing you will have as long as you live, and that is love."

It was a strange question to be answered in a public room in one of the largest hotels in the world, but neither of them felt it strange or fanciful. To the girl Fate was dealing the serious issue of her life; it could not be affected by any incongruity in her surroundings. To the man

it was the paramount moment. She turned her head and her breath came softly, and she said quite solemnly:

"I am going over to the window. Ten minutes is all I ask, and then you shall have your answer."

Edgerton regarded her steadfastly. He did not reply, but threw back his head slightly, and so stood gravely silent. The soft breezes from the river, stirring the seed pearl fringes on the Moorish lamp, made the only sound to disturb the looming silence.

As she recrossed the room to him, Edgerton caught the gleam of something brilliant and shining in her hand. It was a miniature of an elderly man, with a splendid if austere face. It was backed like a locket in dull gold, and surrounded alternately with flawless diamonds and emeralds *en cabochon*. As they sat down again under the Oriental canopy, she laid it in his hands. Her face was very pale and her eyes were wet, but held a look of great tenderness.

"Do you see this?" she asked, and her voice rang very clear and sweet. "It is a likeness of the finest gentleman in all Europe, and the saddest. By the grace of God he is Emperor of a mighty Empire and—and my grandfather.

"Look at him well, Richard Edgerton; he has been father, mother, companion and friend to me. He has been burdened with sorrows, distresses and humiliations, and you are asking me—and in my selfishness I was base enough to think it possible—to be the one to add that finishing touch to his already embittered and unhappy life."

She straightened her shoulders and shut her eyes tightly for a moment, and the hands in her lap twisted and straightened one on the other—and she whispered: "If love were the only thing to be considered!"

Edgerton's heart pulsed loudly, and in the fullness of his love he picked up the white glove she had dropped and set his lips on it once, twice, and then quietly put it down.

"If love were the only thing, I would follow you to the world's end, for we princesses are the pawns of Europe, and I swore if love ever came to me, no matter

what the guise, I would take it—and so I will not say I am too isolated by my lofty position, that Destiny has placed me so high I cannot accept your love because of my dignity or rank, or that my happiness lies in being true to my country. I will not say so, for love has come to me. No—no—wait!" she continued, humbly.

"For many years our house has been pursued by a series of catastrophes so awful that they have convulsed the world. A divine Providence has placed a brave man—he is quite the bravest man I ever knew—to rule a great country. He has been surrounded by ingratitude, selfishness and treachery. He has had to bear all miseries and humiliations in the full daylight, under the pitiless sun of royalty, on an elevation so flooded with light that every criticism of an action remains a blemish. You shall hear of his youth. He had a brother whom he loved. He was supplicated to rule another country and was promised loyalty and devotion, and the story has one sequel which is emblazoned now among the cactuses and sand-hills of Mexico. He lost him by murder and treachery. He had a cousin, and gave him affection and companionship, but Providence erased the light of his reason, and he died a music-mad, selfish lunatic.

"Then, after years spent in grief and bitterness of spirit, he sought for consolation in a consort, and a great God gave to him a woman pure, perfect and divine, and all his royal cousins and sovereigns rejoiced.

"He was given an heir to his throne, and in the fullness of his pride and happiness he thought the burdens of his house lifted, but it was not to be. He lost him, and his loss shocked two continents. I need not tell you how my father died." She threw out her hands with a sudden fierce movement, and said bitterly: "The tragedy they called an accident. The shame and horror of it! For me," she took the miniature and laid it softly to her lips, "he has borne the misfortune and the misery of it. He has borne the ignominy and the shame; so no hint of its horror ever assailed my youth, no prodding into its cause ever made my

life unhappy. He has let it rest and borne the censure of his people and all Europe."

Her voice dropped to a whisper.

"He has borne for my sake the scandal and weaknesses of my mother's life, and the *mésalliances* of his heirs! But even these were not the hour of his suffering. What were his other trials compared to the fearful sorrow he was called upon to bear when they tore from his side his beloved Empress, not by serene death but by murder—cruel, outrageous and bitter to bear? He has suffered every affliction, he whom God has placed so high. Ah, they have hurt him so!"

She put her two hands up to her face and covered her eyes. Edgerton reached out and drew them away; then he took one of them between his own and let his lips rest on it silently and gently, and his words came stumblingly, and all he could say was: "I love you."

Her lips quivered.

"And I—I am the last of his race, the last to uphold his throne. In his old age he has only just me. Could I hurt him more? Say it; shall I hurt him more?"

Edgerton sat beside her silently. He closed his teeth on his lower lip tightly. He took her two hands in his one, and held them close against his heart.

"My Princess, my Charlotte Elizabeth," he said, softly, and caught his breath sharply. "He shall never be hurt again—never through me—never."

And the Archduchess Charlotte Elizabeth Sophia rose to her feet. She stood very erect in her dignity and her young beauty. She could not speak, but stood quietly and searched his face with her fearless eyes long and earnestly.

Suddenly, at the far end of the room where it gave on the corridor, a figure appeared—a figure, somber and sable, towards which the eyes of the Archduchess and Edgerton turned as with a common impulse.

"Helmholtz!"

They breathed the name in unison. She held out her hand and Edgerton took it gravely, and bending over it raised it to his lips.

"God bless Your Royal Highness," he



DRAWN BY EMILE NELSON

"Her hand trembled under his touch."

whispered, in a voice vibrant with emotion.

Her hand trembled under his touch, and her mouth for the moment lost its firmness of outline.

"*Auf wiedersehen!*" she murmured, softly. "Sometime—sometime—"

And then she turned, the sentence still-born on her lips.

Edgerton stood motionless for a full minute. A mist swam before his eyes. When it passed, Her Royal Highness and the black figure in the doorway were gone.

The Last Tyler

BY HARRIET A. NASH

There were few families more prominent in the town of Oakboro than the Tylers. A Tyler had built the first block-house far back in the dim traditional past, a Tyler of the next generation had been on the first board of selectmen, and Tylers for generations thereafter had occupied positions of trust to which the esteem of their townsmen had called them.

It had been a matter of small concern in the days when busy households furnished occupation for many feminine hands that the Tyler family had "run to girls." The daughters of each succeeding generation, strong and possessed of the much-to-be-desired Tyler "faculty," had married into various families of the surrounding country, and brought forth sturdy sons and daughters, all bearing strong resemblance to their maternal ancestors. So there was no lack of descendants to perpetuate the Tyler characteristics, and the circle of those who were known one to another as "Tyler cousins" grew and became a power in the community, proud in its own inherited strength, until one morning when the seventh generation was in its infancy, the bell of the old stone church tolled seventy-four solemn strokes for the passing of the fifth John Tyler, and the family awoke to realize that with him all hope of perpetuating the Tyler name in Oakboro, had passed away.

There were Bronsons, and Davises, Halletts and Markhams, Grahams and Hills—all Tyler in form, feature and disposition and preserving the Tyler characteristics to the exclusion of paternal inheritances; but save for Miss Dulciana, who had been Uncle John's youngest sister and was great-aunt to the youngest generation, there was no living representative of the Tyler name.

Miss Dulciana had been the one unmarried daughter of a large family, patronized by her married sisters, tyrannized over by her brother, and regarded by her parents to the last hour of their lives as "only a child." She had grown up an

unassuming little body, who rarely ventured to express her own opinion, and never insisted upon having her own way. So when, at fifty-five, she was left sole representative of the family name, and independent owner of the family homestead, with its treasured heirlooms, the responsibility bade fair to overwhelm her. Miss Dulciana hastily penned a dozen notes calling a family council. Then, with the notes in her hand, she sat down upon the vine-shaded porch to consider. An hour later she arose, emptied the pile of correspondence from her black silk apron into the kitchen stove, and went out to give the hired man directions for the immediate felling of an apple tree which cut off a view of the village from the window of her own room.

"I guess, after all, the Tyler family can continue to manage without any advisin' from the Grahams and Halletts and Hills," she decided, with conscious superiority in her very name.

The sense of superiority, nourished by the respectful deference of sisters and brothers-in-law, nephews and nieces, grew and increased for a score of years. Nieces married and brought fresh confusion of names into the family connection. The infant grand-nieces and nephews grew up to regard "Aunt Dulcie" with admiring respect, and to wonder what disposal she would make of the Tyler heirlooms. So when word went around through the family that the last Tyler of the name was prostrate with her last illness, interest waxed deep, and family carryalls were hastily brought out for a pilgrimage to the "home place."

"I'm certain she's never made any will," declared Tyler Graham, attorney-at-law, who was believed to have inherited all of old Squire Tyler's legal ability. "I suppose it would be well for me to be there in case she might wish to do so now."

Dr. Tyler Hallett, whose inherited skill in deeds of healing dated back to his great-grandmother's herb closet, shook his head.

"You legal fellows claim that pneumonia wills can't stand law," he objected. "Not but what I'd swear in court, if necessary, that Aunt Tyler's mind is clear as a bell."

Cousin Amelia Hill, who was wife of one Oakboro clergyman and daughter of another, interrupted them reproachfully. "As if any Tyler would question dear Aunt Dulciana's privilege of disposing of her own," she said. "Charles and I are going over merely to offer professional consolation and support in her last hours. Father'll be there, of course, but his doctrine always was a little too rigid for Aunt Dulcie. Charles says she's been a very progressive woman for an unmarried one. I suppose it would be only natural for Grandfather Tyler's books to fall to the ministerial branch of the family."

Miss Dulciana Tyler, in her best lace-trimmed cap and gown, lay among the huge pillows of her great mahogany bed. The sense of her own importance, which had first begun to dawn upon her twenty years before, had nearly reached its culminating point. It was, as her brother-in-law had just finished pointing out to her, a solemn responsibility to be carrying the name of Tyler out of Oakboro and into the Great Beyond; but Miss Dulciana at the present moment was deeply concerned with those things which, alas, she could not carry, but must leave behind. The trained nurse whom Dr. Hallett had insisted upon installing by the patient's bedside, regarded with jealous eyes the family invasion, but Miss Dulciana, having lived according to her own will for twenty years, was not minded to die at last under the arbitrary despotism of a stranger.

"Who's come now?" she inquired feebly as each succeeding rumble of wheels sounded upon the turf outside. "I do hope Eliza's got the new doormat turned wrong side up, so the roses won't get dust marks on. I want some one should tell Robert Markham not to hitch that cribbing horse of his to my good fence." Miss Tyler sniffed inquiringly as a breath of summer air stole through the curtained windows. "It isn't to be supposed that any of my nephews would smoke at such a time as this, but if one of them feels he must, I wish he'd stand under that high-

top sweeting tree. They say tobacco smoke is good for wire-worms."

"As soon as they're all here, I shall begin giving away my things," she continued presently, unheeding the nurse's command not to talk. "I wonder if some of those brocade silks would be too rich-looking for Amelia Hill. The poor child's spent her life in the shadow of the pulpit, and I should like to feel she was well dressed for once. Your grandfather's books, Tyler Hallett, I shall leave to you, and my dying request is that you read them carefully. You're inclined to be light-minded, as I've often noticed, and the perusal of serious literature would be a regulator to your mind. Has Tyler Graham come? No, I don't want the advice of any of you boys about the disposal of my things. I was only thinking, as the oldest nephew he'd probably expect the mahogany desk. I hope he won't put it to any base uses. The legal profession isn't what it was in Grandsir Tyler's time. Sarah Hill can have the brocade curtains; she's a good housekeeper and they won't get moth-eaten in her house. And my best feather beds are to be divided between Sister Abigail's daughters, with the distinct understanding that they're to remain feather beds and not be cut up into sofa pillows. Edith Markham isn't going to have the parlor candelabra, though she's been throwing out hints for it these ten years past. That's going to Elvira Davis, who hasn't a piece of solid silver in her house. Edith can have the parlor rocker. Every boy in the family that's named Tyler is to have one of Grandsir Tyler's gold dollars, and each girl named Dulciana a silver spoon. Was that two teams drove in together? I guess they might as well begin to come in now. Don't you dare to give me any medicine that will muddle up my brains before I get done using them, Tyler Hallett. If it hadn't been for upholding the family I should have sent for old Dr. Knox, and like as any way been on my feet by now."

The long procession of relatives filed through the room, listening to Miss Dulciana's disposal of her household gods, and her careful directions as to their use.

"I guess that's all," she said wearily as her grand-niece Martha Bronson, with her

twin babies Tyler and Dulciana, left the room.

Two hours later Miss Tyler awakened suddenly from sleep. "Emily Grant and little Dulcie haven't been here," she exclaimed. "I want Eliza should send right down for them. I don't know as there's an earthly thing left to give them, but I should kind of like to see Emily once more. She always was clear Tyler, while all the others are more or less mixed."

Emily Grant, a thin, anxious looking woman in rusty widow's dress, arrived just at sunset. With her was "little Dulcie," a fair-haired girl of twenty.

"I don't think you'd better come in," whispered the nurse at the door of the sick-room. "I think she's going."

"No, I'm not," retorted Miss Tyler shortly. "Come right in, Emily."

"I wish you'd been here earlier," she continued regretfully. "Tyler Hallett's medicine sort of went to my head, though I told him better, and I forgot some things I meant to have remembered. There isn't a thing left for you without it's that jar of mince-meat in the pantry. I intended that for the funeral, but the hens are laying well and I guess they can make out with custards instead. I'm real sorry. Dulcie ought to have had something real pretty. She's the living image of what I was at her age. Even the last teaspoon went to Martha Bronson's twin, which I have good reason to believe was named after she heard about the gold dollars and teaspoons."

Miss Tyler became silent, and Emily Grant, at a gesture from the nurse, rose to tiptoe from the room. Her aunt's voice arrested her upon the doorsill.

"Come back, Emily," commanded Miss Dulciana. "I'm going to give Dulcie my engagement ring. She's a good girl, and worthy of the best, and my whim of being buried in it is kind of wasteful, after all. It's in the upper drawer of the big chest of drawers, Emily, in the right-hand corner, in a pasteboard box. Maria Davis's going to have the chest of drawers. You take the ring right out and put it on Dulcie's finger here and now."

Miss Dulciana dozed again, and her niece softly left the room. "She won't know you again," declared the nurse, with a note of dismissal in her tone, and Emily Grant put on her bonnet for departure. The jar of mince-meat was in



DRAWN BY WALTER J. ENRIGHT

"You legal fellows claim that pneumonia wills can't stand law."

its place, but the corner of the parlor where the chest of drawers had stood for nearly a century, was empty. Indeed, save for the high-backed sofa and the carpet upon the floor, there was no article of furniture left in the room. Tables, pictures, mantel ornaments, all had vanished.

"They thought they might's well take the things right away," explained Eliza in subdued tone. "There'll be enough to do afterwards, and it would save any misunderstandings that might come up later. You'd better take the mince-meat to-night. I've had misgivin's about usin' it from the first. Mince pie is too suggestive of Thanksgivin's and merry-makin's to look well at such a time as this."

Emily Grant and "little Dulcie" walked down the long hill, carrying between them the heavy stone jar. The older woman was silent, turning over in her own mind a perplexing problem. The one family quarrel existing in the whole Tyler connection, lay between her own branch and the Davis cousins. Dulcie, with dreamy eyes fixed on the last gleam of sunset, and the pale young moon just visible above the tree tops, had no suspicion of the struggle going on beside her.

"We haven't spoke for years," the mother said abruptly, "Maria Davis and I. But I'm going to stop to her house on my way home and get that ring." The girl's mind recalled itself reluctantly from a wondrous day-dream in which neither death nor age had part. Her mother's tone jarred upon her.

"Don't, ma," she protested. "I don't want the ring."

Mrs. Grant insisted. "It was the handsomest ring in the family," she declared. "Cousin Eben Tyler—your grandma's cousin and Aunt Dulcie's—paid a hundred dollars for it the week before he was taken down with his last sickness, and he put it on her finger with his last breath. She didn't want to take it off, but Uncle John and the other girls said it was sinful extravagance to wear it every day. Aunt Dulcie had plenty of other offers, but she remained single rather than marry out of the Tyler name. Maria Davis's got a

light in her parlor. I'm going to stop in and get that ring."

Protests were vain, and Dulcie, with the jar of mince-meat in her arms, went reluctantly on down the road. The last gleam of light had faded, and her mind stubbornly refused to drift back to the interrupted dream. "I don't want Aunt Dulcie's old ring," Dulcie decided with an air of contempt. "I wish there wasn't anything old in all the world, but everything was new and everybody young."

Some one came swiftly beside her and took the burden forcibly from her arms. Dulciana felt a sudden relief from vague foreboding.

"Don't spill it, Robert," she cried happily. "Aunt Dulciana's legacy is in that jar."

Emily Grant went up the avenue to the front door of the Davis home. It was a large house, of more pretentious structure than most homes of Oakboro. The Davis branch of the family was well-to-do. Cousin Maria, holding open the heavy door the space of three inches, listened coldly to her breathless demand.

"Aunt Dulciana gave me the chest of drawers in the hearing of witnesses," Mrs. Davis replied, "and I took particular notice that she didn't make any reservations as to contents. I shouldn't feel to be bound by any last rambling directions she might give to the contrary. Cousin Tyler Hallett said before we came away that she'd never rouse to a realizing sense of worldly things again. No, I don't feel to give up the ring under the circumstances."

Emily Grant crossed the wide veranda and went swiftly down the avenue, yet not too swiftly to see through the lighted windows a circle of animated young faces gathered about the mahogany chest of drawers. She noted with resentment that both Maria Davis's daughters wore new silk waists—Dulcie's best was a white linen embroidered by her own slender fingers. Two other facts impressed themselves upon Mrs. Grant's consciousness; the long windows of the Davis parlor came quite to the veranda floor—and the fastening of one was broken. Her own little cottage, among a group of blossoming fruit trees, looked small and mean. Even

the happy murmur of voices from the vine-shaded porch failed to give her satisfaction.

"Good-evening, Robert," she said stiffly. "The night air's getting damp, Dulcie. You'd better come in."

Robert Elliot rose instantly. "It is all my fault," he declared. "I wouldn't come in, because I knew I ought not to stop a minute. But I hadn't seen Dulcie since she came home from Boxtown, and I wanted to ask about her term of school and tell her all my news. I've got a case to try against Squire Graham, Dulcie. I hope you won't mind if I beat him, though he is a relative of yours."

Mrs. Grant laughed mirthlessly. "I guess there's other folks in town as good as the Tyler connection," she said shortly. "Though most of the family don't seem to sense it, that's a fact."

The young man lingered for a moment. "Shall you be at home to-morrow evening?" he inquired.

"I guess so," replied Dulcie shyly.

"She'll have something handsome to show you, too," Mrs. Grant interposed. "Such an ornament as I never hoped to see a daughter of mine wearing. You ought to tell Robert your news, child, while he was sitting here, but since you didn't, to-morrow night'll do."

Dulciana ate her supper dreamily. Mrs. Grant talked feverishly upon any

"Dulcie went reluctantly down the road."

and every subject which occurred to her, that her daughter might not have opportunity to inquire the success of her errand. The daughter's mind had wandered far from the thought of her great-aunt's legacy, and was shyly admitting the blissful knowledge that somewhere not very far in the future might be an engagement ring of her very own.

Late that night, after all Oakboro was hushed in slumber and Dulcie in an upper room of the little cottage was continuing



DRAWN BY WALTER J. ENRIGHT

in dreamland the interrupted day-dream, Mrs. Grant arose from her seat by the window, wrapped herself in a shawl, and gently closed the outer door behind her. Then she hurried up the dark road to the Davis house. "I don't care," she thought defiantly, as she tiptoed across the veranda, "the ring is Dulcie's and she's going to have it. Aunt Dulciana's dying command was to take the ring out of that drawer and put it on Dulcie's finger. I'm not going to disregard the last command of the last Tyler just to please Maria Davis and satisfy her greed of gain."

An hour later she was back in her own room with the ring beneath her pillow, and triumph in her heart.

Emily Grant held Aunt Dulciana's ring towards her daughter in the morning sunlight. "See this, child," she said.

The glowing ruby in the center seemed to absorb the brilliant rays of the six tiny diamonds around it. Dulciana, to whom all the world was glorified this morning, quite forgot her prejudice for things new, and admired the jewels with girlish enthusiasm, slipping the ring upon one finger after another.

"It's far handsomer than any of the other girls have got," she declared, as she started for a round of morning calls with the ring upon her finger. Mrs. Grant hesitated. For the first time the possible consequences of her act suggested themselves to her.

"I wouldn't say much as to where I got it, till it leaks out itself," she said.

Late that afternoon, Tyler Markham, deputy sheriff for Oak County, approached Mrs. Grant's door and beckoned the widow to a mysterious conference beneath the apple-trees.

"Maria Davis sent me down to recover a ring," he explained. "She says it was stolen out of her parlor last night, and Dulcie's a-wearing of it. Maria says it's valuable, and she'd be justified in having arrests made, but she don't want no disgrace in the family while Aunt Tyler's hovering between life and death. If the ring's returned at once it'll be all quiet and no questions asked."

Mrs. Grant's eyes blazed. "You may tell Maria Davis," she said haughtily,

"that the ring belongs to my daughter and will not be returned. Aunt Dulciana's dying command to me was to take the ring out of that drawer and put it on Dulcie's finger. I guess the dying command of the last Tyler is a little more binding than any impudent messages from Maria Davis, if she does send the sheriff to tell them."

Dulcie, with troubled face, interposed. "Oh, mother," she said, "I don't want the ring. Let us send it back."

"Dulciana Grant," replied the mother, "don't you take that ring off your finger. After all I've been through, the very least you can do is to uphold me by wearing it."

The sheriff looked perplexed. "Well," he said, "it hasn't come to legal action yet, and it prob'y won't while Aunt lingers. If worst comes to worst, I can resign my office rather'n arrest a member of the family, and Tyler Graham says distinctly he sha'n't accept no retainer from either side. It's got around some among the family, though I'm free to hope family pride'll keep it from going further. The Tyler's are close-mouthed enough when it comes to a matter of family pride. Beats all how Aunt Dulciana clings to life, don't it?"

"I can't wear this ring, mother," Dulcie protested, as the sheriff cousin disappeared up the street.

Mrs. Grant buried her face in her apron. "That's all the pay a mother gets for sacrificing herself for her children," she sobbed. "It would look like a confession of guilt for you to leave it off now." And the daughter reluctantly slipped it back upon her finger.

Robert Elliot found himself received that evening with some constraint. Dulcie, nervously crocheting, with downcast eyes, wondered whether the story had reached his ears, and found little to say to him. With every turn of her hand the jewels of Aunt Dulciana's ring flashed in the lamplight.

The young man interrupted his own absent-minded account of a spring merrymaking, to reach his hand towards it across the table. "I heard something about you to-day, but I didn't half believe it. Was it true, then; and is this the ring?" he asked.

Dulciana nodded guiltily. "Yes, it's true," she said, slipping the ring from her finger with some relief. "Would you like to see it? Most folks consider it very handsome." She pushed it shyly towards him, and he examined it with grave face.

"I'm going to keep it and wear it," Dulcie explained, as he passed it back to her. "Mother wants I should. She wouldn't feel at all satisfied to have me do differently," she hesitated, while a flood of color overspread her face. "I hope you don't blame me," she ventured.

Robert Elliot's answer was quite without enthusiasm. "Not at all," he said. The sense of constraint deepened, and Robert took his departure, pleading some forgotten law papers.

Aunt Dulciana, with full support of the Tyler constitution, lingered day after day, all unconscious that down in the village of Oakboro her carefully preserved dresses were being transformed into silk waists of the latest pattern, and her feather beds, despite her firm commands, had already become sofa pillows. The story of the engagement ring seethed and bubbled among the Tyler cousins, as all waited the developments which should come with the death of Miss Dulciana. Dulciana Grant, with head erect and lips which tried to smile, wore the ring—to church, to sewing-society and into every public gathering of the town. And Robert Elliot came no more to the little house among the apple trees.

"I suppose it's on account of the ring,"

Mrs. Grant suggested sharply to her daughter.

Dulcie nodded. "I'd rather not talk about it, please," she answered.

While they waited, to the surprise of Dr. Hallett, the gratification of the city nurse, and the unmistakable consternation of more than one among the Tyler cousins, Miss Dulciana began to mend. Slowly but surely the Tyler constitution baffled disease and fought its way back to health. Physician and nurse, fearing a relapse, used every endeavor to keep the patient quiet, and for a time Miss Tyler patiently submitted to their rules. But the day came when she paid and dismissed her nurse, sent a curt note to her nephew, informing him that his professional services were no longer required; then, tying on a large gingham apron and intent upon resuming her beloved household occupations, she walked briskly across the threshold of her room, for the first time in many weeks. Slowly and with increasing dismay she went from one to another of the dismantled rooms, cutting short, with crushing dignity, all Eliza's attempts at explanation or apology.

Two hours later, the village of Oakboro was electrified by beholding Miss Tyler on the high seat of her large express wagon, driving her black horse at a headlong pace down the village street. Neighbors waved their hands in greeting, and more than one old townsman shouted an assurance that he was "glad to see her out."



DRAWN BY WALTER J. ENRIGHT

"I want my silver spoons."



DRAWN BY WALTER J. ENRIGHT

"You know young Lawyer Elliott, I suppose?"

But Miss Tyler had not come forth to receive the congratulations of her neighbors. "I want my inlaid desk, and my silk quilt, and my gold dollar and my

silver spoons," she demanded breathlessly at Tyler Graham's door. "I'm not blaming the others so much; the Tylers for generations have been marrying into

families of grasping dispositions. But a man of legal attainments should have known better. I said plainly and distinctly to all of you but Emily Grant that the things were to be yours *after* I was *done* with them. Just load the desk into the back part of my wagon. Isaac is following with the hayrack after the largest pieces of furniture, but I can't trust that desk to anybody's driving but my own."

Late that afternoon Miss Tyler drove slowly homeward, her wagon piled with china and silverware, rugs, pictures and draperies, half-completed sofa cushions and silk waists, her indignation against her relatives waxing stronger with each addition to her load. Dr. Hallett alone she greeted with something like friendliness.

"I'm glad to see you didn't take the books," she said. "I only wish I could think it was out of regard for me, and not for fear you'd have to read them."

Behind the wagon followed the hayrack, driven by Miss Tyler's hired man. "Liveliest funeral procession I ever took part in," declared Isaac to the doctor.

Mrs. Grant waved a note before her daughter's eyes with triumphant gesture. "Read that, child," she cried. "I'd like to know what Maria Davis'll say now."

"Dear Niece Emily," the note read, "I suppose the mince-meat is all eaten by now. If not, you might send me up enough for a couple of pies, since it's too late to make more this season. The ring, Dulcie may keep. I always meant it to be hers some day. Your obedient servant, 'Dulciana Tyler.'

Mrs. Grant looked thoughtfully down, at the stone jar. "It hasn't been touched," she said. "I couldn't bring myself to use it while she laid so near to death, and we were having such trouble with the ring, and all. You can take it back to her just as it is, child."

Dulcie rose quickly. "And the ring?" she asked. "Oh, mother, do say I may take the ring back too."

Mrs. Grant looked disappointed. "I should like to see you wearing it, just for a lesson to Maria Davis," she said. "But, there, I don't know. Do just as you think best, child."

Dulciana left the stone jar in the cool Tyler kitchen, and pushed open the door into the sitting-room. Miss Tyler, fully restored to health, rocked to and fro, reciting in a monotone a list of her restored treasures. Beside the inlaid desk, with pen in hand and most professional air, sat Robert Elliot.

"I'm making my will, Dulcie," explained Miss Tyler. "And you needn't mention it in the family, but I'm going to give each one exactly what I did before. The silk waists may be out of style by the time I get through with them, but they're going back to Amelia Markham's daughters half-finished as they are. You know young Lawyer Elliot, I suppose? My grandniece, Miss Gränt, Mr. Elliot. I hated to go out of the family to get him, but I wouldn't gratify Tyler Graham by calling him to make my will. I see the wisdom of it, too, for this young gentleman has just pointed out to me that I forgot to give away the house and farm."

Dulcie bowed stiffly in the young man's direction. Then she crossed the room to the older woman's side. "Here's your ring, Aunt Dulcie," she said hurriedly. "It was ever so kind of you to say that I might keep it, but I know how I should feel if it had been my engagement ring. I should want to keep it always, and be buried with it on my finger. And I hope you will, but not for many, many years. And mother sent back the jar of mince-meat with her love, and is coming up to see you very soon."

She was half-way down the shadowy lane which led to the highway when Robert overtook her.

"Dulcie," he said, "I thought it was your ring—I mean some other fellow's ring—an engagement ring. That was the story Oakboro told, and the Tyler connection only smiled and looked pleased. Don't you see what a fool I was, dear, and how easily I made the mistake? Do you think you can ever forgive me, and let me bring another ring to take its place?"

It was nearly an hour later that he went back to where Miss Tyler sat waiting with a patience she had not been known to display for twenty years. She was twisting the ruby ring thoughtfully around her

wrinkled finger. "I believe I'll leave the house and farm to Dulcie, to take the place of the ring," she said.

Robert Elliot gathered up his papers. "In that case, I would better send my father up to draw the will," he said. "As future husband of the principal legatee, I should not wish to leave Squire Graham any ground upon which to break the will."

Miss Tyler's eyes blazed as she settled the ring firmly upon her finger.

"You sit right down in that chair and write out what I told you," she said in decided tone. "I should like to see Tyler Graham try to break any will I choose to make. It's going to be a great blow to him when he finds I didn't have to go out of the family to get it made."

His Chaperon

BY ALDIS DUNBAR

"Here, hold the 'phone, Central. Oh, that you, Mrs. Darent? I'm at home again, you see. Had a splendid cruise, and met no end of nice people. Some of them came back with me for a day or two. I called you up to see whether you'd be willing to chaperon a party, this evening. We'll drive out to the Ravine, have a picnic supper, and come home by moonlight. It's just an impromptu affair."

"Chaperon!" With a faint gasp Alys Darent looked quickly around at her sister, wondering whether she had heard, but Fran was rocking placidly in her low rattan chair, deeply absorbed in her embroidery.

"Don't say you've another engagement," went on the cheery voice. "I've set my heart on making my plan a success, and it can't be done without you. Do say you'll come!"

"Why—I—" began Alys, indefinitely. "Isn't Peggy—"

"She and Don took the train for Washington, an hour ago. It's a business trip, and they'll not be back until Saturday. You aren't going to fail, me, are you?"

Mrs. Darent threw back her head with an impatient little jerk, and answered firmly:

"Why, no. Of course I'll do it, with pleasure. At what hour shall I be ready?"

"At four, prompt," came the reply. "It's awfully good of you not to leave me stranded."

"And how many are to be in your party?"

"Why, while I was away I met—
The voice died away.

"Met whom?"

No reply.

With a quick movement, Mrs. Darent hung up the receiver.

"Those telephone people have the most provoking way of cutting one off in the middle of a sentence!" she protested. "Fran, who are the people staying at the Warings? Broughty is arranging a picnic for them, this afternoon, but Central shut him off just as he was telling me about them."

"Why, let me see," began her sister, slowly drawing a scarlet thread from her silken skein. "As I was passing there yesterday I saw a couple of strange men on the steps of their porch. And Broughty had a very pretty girl at the theater, last night. Didn't you notice them?"

"No. Why didn't you tell me that he had come back from that yachting trip?"

"I hardly thought you'd care whether he was in town or not. You kept him at arm's length so persistently, before he went away."

"What else could I do?" asked Mrs. Darent, combatively, from the window seat, where she sat pulling bits of fluff out of an unlucky tassel. "I couldn't let him get to the—the serious point. A boy like that!"

"Serious?" Miss Carter's blue eyes danced, but she kept them on the barberries that she was working. "He reached that stage before you were in second mourning. If he hadn't been serious—and the best-tempered fellow I ever knew, besides—he wouldn't have kept on devoting himself to you, and ask-

ing you everywhere, after the way you've acted."

"But what—"

"And as for the rest," went on Fran, ignoring all interruption, "Broughton Waring is two months older than I am. Of course two years can make an immense difference, if you care so much what people say,"—incoherently.

But Alys was shaking with helpless, half hysterical laughter.

"You—didn't hear, Fran. I—I guess—he's quite—cured!"

"Are you crazy? What do you mean, Alys? Be sensible!" catching her arm.

"Broughty—he wanted me to come to this picnic—as chaperon!"

Fran drew a long breath, her eyes opening wide. "Did you tell him you wouldn't go?"

"I—I couldn't very well refuse. I thought—it showed that he had quite given up—other ideas."

"Hm—m!" admitted Fran. "It does sound final. I wonder who that girl was. So bright looking, with clear dark coloring, and masses of hair. One doesn't often see such black waves. They made a stunning contrast with Broughty's fair crop. Well, you must feel it a relief to have him off your mind at last. Tell me all about her afterwards, Alys, will you? There's the lunch bell! I had no notion it was so late."

"Is it? I don't believe I want any, Fran, if you'll send me up some tea. My head aches, and I'm going to lie down." The rest of her words were lost, as the portière swung heavily between, and Miss Carter heard light steps going slowly up the stairs.

"You're not neglecting all your nice people for me, are you?" Mrs. Darent looked up with some surprise at sight of Waring, quite alone on the seat of the brown dog-cart.

"That's all right. You'll meet them later—and find your hands full, never fear,"—springing down to meet her with frank unconcern. "Finest kind of a day for a picnic, isn't it? Never a cloud in the sky. I'm glad you were able to come"—he held out a strong brown hand and helped her carefully into the cart—

"and that you weren't afraid to assume the great responsibility offered you."

"No, indeed," with ready cordiality, "though I wish Peggy might have been here to share it."

"She couldn't, you see," returned Waring, gravely, as he took his place beside her and flicked the gray mare with the whip. "Do you prefer the lake road, or the one around by the creek?"

"Whichever way the others of your party are taking, of course. Isn't it a novelty to consult your chaperon as to routes? Or must I think it an especial bit of deference, meant to propitiate me in advance? It's not needed. I came intending to be very indulgent."

"We're taking the lake road," announced Broughty, with prompt decision, ignoring her other remarks. "It's shorter—and shadier," he added a moment later, whisking around the corner with a graze of the wheel against the curbstone that made his companion start uneasily.

In silence they whirled out along the smooth lake road. In spite of Alys' acquiescence in her new dignity, Broughty's last remark had caught her unawares. She felt a little hot flush in her cheeks, and the dimple, that came when she was glad of living, vanished, as she bit her lip and turned to look out over the blue water, hoping that he had not seen.

"I wanted to be sure of not boring you by making the drive too long," he went on, apparently intent on the gray mare's ears.

"Oh, do you have to keep rubbing it in?" exclaimed Mrs. Darent, half under her breath. Then—"Excuse me. I was thinking of something else. Indeed, you are very thoughtful of my comfort, and I really do appreciate it. Are the others of your party ahead of us, or behind? Fran was telling me that she saw you at the theater, last night, with one of your guests."

"Yes." Broughty glanced carelessly back over his shoulder, at the long stretch of road by which they had come. "That was Miss Champion.—I don't see the sign of a team behind us yet.—What did Fran say?"

"That you were with a lovely brunette." Waring nodded. "She is a beauty. I

know you'll think so too, when you see her."

"Tell me about her."

"I will," assented Waring, turning up a narrow, hilly by-road. "After we reach the Ravine. The drive hasn't been tiring you too much, has it?"

"Oh, no."

Above their heads the branches of the trees were meeting now. Green-golden lights and olive shadows flitted across the creamy cloth of her dress, and Alys watched them absently as they came and went. Suddenly they ceased to run along her arm, and on looking up she saw the moss-grown bars of the old zigzag fence among the bushes.

"I'll tie the mare here," said Waring, jumping down over the wheel, and turning to aid her, ceremoniously. He let down the bars that crossed the narrow path, and she passed on into the woods without waiting for him. There was no sign of the dimple, now. Her face was half hidden by the drooping brim of her hat. The woods were very peaceful in the late afternoon. It would be good to be here, alone—free to think. She rather dreaded the coming of Broughton's guests. They would chatter—and laugh—and joke.

A stone's throw ahead of her was a rift in the mass of foliage. Beneath it, almost at her feet, lay the deep chasm in the hill-side—so like a miniature cañon, with its rough, shaley sides, covered sparsely by creeping vines and undergrowth. Standing very still, she could hear the splash of the shallow stream that ran among the stones, down there.

Then came quick, firm steps, brushing through grass and dried leaves to her side.

"Haven't they turned up yet?" she asked, indifferently.

"They *are* slow, aren't they?" commented Waring. "We may as well sit down and take it easy. Here's a nice, inviting rock for you, and I'll camp down on the pine needles"—dropping into a comfortable position and gathering up a handful of tiny cones. "You see, I've not had a chance to talk to you alone for weeks and weeks. You wouldn't let me before I went away, you know; and this

is the first I've seen of you for two months. Lots of things happen in two months, don't they?"

"You want to tell me about Miss Champion? I'm glad, Broughton." She said it very naturally.

"Yes," with deliberation, "you would be, I knew. And will you give me some advice? About the things that seem to come in between us? Did Fran say—?"

"Only that she was most attractive."

"She's awfully square, too. I want to do the right thing. I've come to think a heap of her," boyishly.

"Yes."

"But—there's no one else I can talk right out to, as I do to you."

"Yes."

"It's like this. When a man gets to—care so much for some one that he's thinking about her all the time, and can't feel as if life was worth while when he's away from her; and when he's sure, all the time, that she might care for him too, if she only let herself go—there isn't any real reason why she shouldn't, you see," he broke off.

"Surely not." Certain gray eyes, resting on Waring's broad shoulders, thick, fair hair and half-averted, sun-browned face, grew very wistful.

"Well, she has more money than I'm likely to have, for some years to come."

"How could *that* matter?" interrupted Alys. "You are a strong, energetic man, not an idler. You are sure to make a success of your work. She ought to be proud of you. Why haven't you spoken plainly to her?"

"We-ell, you see—once, several years ago, there was another man. I don't think she was really in love with him. She was just a young girl, and it didn't last long. He wasn't good for much, either. But she knows that I know about him, and sometimes I'm afraid I've no right—"

"Broughton Waring, that is too absurd! You admit that this girl might care for you. What right have you to hurt her by raking up some childish fancy to come between you?"

Waring was silent.

"Are those the only barriers?"

"Aren't they high enough?"

"They don't exist! Oh, Broughty!" losing all thought of herself, "how can you risk wasting her life and yours, too, by inventing such trivialities? I don't know *her*—"

"She's the *dearest*—"

"But I do know you. If such things count with her, she's not worthy of you. If they don't, I know you can make her care for you, even if she doesn't, yet. Tell me, truly, are those all?"

"No. There's one more. You see, I'm a little younger than she. Not enough to make any real difference, you know, but enough to make her feel that people would say—"

"People!" with utter scorn. Then—silence broken only by the stirring of the wind in the green boughs.

"You don't agree with—people?" His face was turned from her.

Slowly, almost noiselessly, she rose from the rock seat and went unsteadily toward the edge of the ravine. She leaned against a slender birch tree, and looked down into the chasm.

"You haven't answered me. I meant that for a question. Do you agree with—them?" As quietly he had come beside her.

"No," she whispered. Then, imploringly—"Broughty, would you—please—

go back to the bars, and see if your friends are not there?"

"They haven't come. No, it's no use trying to send me away. I wish you would look at me, Alys. Your hand is like ice! How have I frightened you? Dear, you are shaking all over! I only wanted to be certain of one thing. You don't agree with—people! Nor I, Alys!"

What need, now, of the white birch?

"Broughty—you said—Miss Champion—"

"Not I! It was you, yourself, who thought—something entirely wrong, sweetheart."

"I'm—glad."

"You would be, I knew," laughed Waring. Alys drew herself away from his arm, and looked down the path.

"They will be coming. You must let me go."

"No one is coming, dear."

"But where are your friends, then?"

"If it had occurred to you to ask that before, Alys—you forgot to, you see. But I've been scrupulously careful to speak the exact truth. They are in Washington, with Peggy and Don."

"You—asked—me—to—a chaperon—a party!"

"There—you misunderstood a clear statement of fact. You see—I'm the party!"

The Poacher

BY ELIZABETH HIGGINS

It was Catherine's habit to impart some neighborhood intelligence as she would lay Mathew's breakfast tray before him. This particular morning she said, "Some one has moved into the brown cottage, Mr. Gering; I seen a man and his Japenee, but I ain't seen no wife nor children."

A shade of displeasure crossed Mathew Gering's face. The three cottages of which his was the middle one, stood high up on the chaparral-covered foot-hills. In the cottage on his west Geneva lived, and the coming of this stranger seemed the end of the seclusion.

The following morning Catherine's intelligence touched a little nearer home.

"Caesar ain't here for breakfast, Mr. Gering. He's hanging round the brown cottage; I seen him with the man."

Mathew shook his head in positive doubt—it was not Caesar, the canine cad, the snob who noticed no one; it was some other dog she saw, another big St. Bernard; perhaps the man's own.

Later in the day Mathew went for a walk with Caesar in attendance. Soon the dog pricked up his ears and ran forward. Mathew was more than surprised to see him running to meet a stranger, the man in the brown cottage, most probably, he reasoned; and old Catherine was right after all.

Something in the man's bearing caught Mathew's notice—the cleft chin, the stolid litheness of his build, the set of the shoulders, all strangely familiar. They were abreast in a moment, and the stranger turned sharply as Mathew passed.

"Why, of all God's creation, is this you, Mathew Gering?"

"Lieutenant Carson!" Mathew exclaimed, wheeling to face the speaker.

"Fifteen years have not changed you a bit; I knew you at first sight," said Carson.

Mathew took with polite endurance the offered hand. "It is fifteen years," he said; "and pardon me if I have undervalued your rank—you may be Captain Carson now."

"No, I'm nothing now. I left the navy years ago. I came into some money, not much, I regret to say, but enough to entitle me to my own way. Oh, I love my country, Gering; that's the trouble, I love my country. Like Mary, I have chosen the wiser part, which shall not be taken from me—I am content to love my country, and those who may can serve her."

They walked a block, and Gering said nothing. Carson turned more than once to scrutinize his features. "Oh, I say, Gering," he burst out, "thaw a bit—you've not got it in for me yet, have you?"

"I have nothing in for you, Mr. Carson," but his manner did not affirm his words.

"Oh, come now, Mat; the trouble is you take existence too seriously. You've yet to learn that life is a humorous play; and hard luck is only when the huge joke of living takes a practical turn on a fellow." Carson added, "Is that dog yours?"

"Yes," and the other's manner was less formidable.

"Upon my word, a most noble brute, Gering."

"I'm fairly proud of his looks myself."

"Where did you get him?"

"In England. Saw him in a bench show and took a fancy to him."

"Have you ever exhibited him here?"

"No, I'm rather too fond of his company to part with him even for so short a time."

"I love a good dog as I do my right

hand; I never own one; but wherever I go some other fellow's dog is always giving me his confidence and society."

Caesar was walking at Mr. Carson's side, Mathew curiously noted at the time.

"I've never taken a dog, Gering, because till now I've never seen one that is just what I fancy."

"Did you ever have a wholly honest fancy, Carson?"

Carson laughed amiably; and, changing the subject, he asked, "Are you married yet, Gering?"

"No," Mathew said shortly.

"I say, don't you live in the house next to mine? That's where this dog puts up."

"I live where the dog puts up."

Carson slapped Mathew on the shoulder, bursting into a roistering laugh. "Of course, of course, I've heard the neighborhood gossip," he went on joyously, "you're engaged to the stunning girl who lives in the cottage on your right."

"My engagement to Miss Durphin has been announced for some time," Mathew said a little coldly.

Again Carson held out his hand. "Congratulations, congratulations," he said. "And, Mathew, they say she is richer than mud; and what do you want with more money?"

Gering let his hand fall from the other's clasp.

"Heartiest congratulations, old man; my best wishes and good luck to you this time."

Mathew drew his hand away before Carson's fingers had relaxed to release it. The last sentence seemed to freeze him like a wind from the snow-capped range above.

With majesty becoming an emperor, Caesar walked up the path, and the company on Gering's veranda turned their admiring eyes on the great, tawny body. He proudly carried himself up the steps, walking with head disdainfully straight forward. Genevra Durphin bent toward him, extending her small white hand, but he passed on without noticing her. Caesar shot a glance at his master as he neared his chair. Mathew said nothing to the dog, only watching him sternly. Caesar went on, the tail drop-

ping lower—a shrinking of his croup, the attitude of a dog who is losing his self-respect. As he approached the Morris chair holding Ralph Carson, Caesar's head bent lower, the drooping tail swayed at its tip, and he crouched beside the man.

A laugh swept the veranda, and, when it died away, "They say the man who can't keep his dog can't keep his wife," Ralph Carson said in his slow drawl.

There was a laugh again, not so pronounced this time, and Genevra raised her face quickly, the mouth strained, the eyes pained. Half angrily she glanced at the speaker, then turned doubtfully to Mathew.

Mrs. Durphin cleared her throat threateningly, an ugly spot of red showing vividly on each cheek.

Archie Young looked up painfully puzzled. Archie had not been long in the States, and barely a week in California, and he found the western humor especially hard of understanding. "But," he commenced, half-hesitating, "Gering hasn't a wife anyway."

Only one laugh this time, and it was from Dick Wynne. "No, no," Dick said with the easy words of smiling lips, "as Emerson says, Mat's 'still straying with the virgin band'; but we may lose him any day now."

Again Mrs. Durphin's throat was cleared. Genevra rose from her chair. She left the veranda, and walked pensively along the roses bordering the path.

"I'll bid you time-killers all good-day," Ralph said, rising. "I've letters and things to work over. Thank you, Mat, for your cheering cup—you always did pour good tea." He flung his cigarette into a clump of bushes, and paused with his hand on the veranda railing. "Who loves me follows," he cried, vaulting the railing and landing lightly on his feet some yards beyond.

The dog's tawny length shot after him.

The next minute Carson was seen walking beside Genevra's tall, white-robed figure.

"Genevra, Genevra," Mrs. Durphin called to her daughter, "it's getting cold; I'm going home."

The dark and the white figures moved slowly along the path before the three cottages.

"Genevra, Genevra," Mrs. Durphin called again.



DRAWN BY VICTOR R. LAMBDIN

"Of course I have heard the neighborhood gossip."

"Yes, Mother," the girl answered over her shoulder; "I'll be home soon; only a minute, Mother."

Carson paused at the gate. "Oh, Gering, Gering," he said, "call off your dog; he's following me."

Presently Mrs. Durphin rose to take her leave. She discovered she had left her shawl in the house, and Mathew went in its search. He found it on a chair in the screened room off the veranda. Near by Archie Young and Dick Wynne

were seated, and Mathew caught a sentence. "I can't say I like the chap," the young Englishman was saying, "too much of a damned poacher, don't you know."

After his guests had departed, Mathew stood in his darkening library. On her porch Mrs. Durphin sat enwrapped in a mantle, waiting for her daughter. Up and down before the cottages two figures walked, Carson and Geneva.

"What did you mean, Mr. Carson," the girl repeated, "what did you mean by saying you gave Mathew an ugly rub?"

"Don't, please don't think I was implying he had lost a wife."

"You meant something," she said, "and you have only marked it by your apology."

Ralph smiled inwardly—she had not the faintest suspicion of the transparency of her course.

"How long have you known Mr. Gering?" he asked.

"Only since he came to Santa Theresa."

"You see, Gering and I are old friends."

"Yes, I've heard you knew each other in Washington fifteen years ago."

"Yes, it is just fifteen years now since it happened."

"What happened, Mr. Carson?"

He looked at the girl sharply in the twilight. She looked twenty-four or -five. But she must be younger, he told himself, maybe eighteen. The luxury of the tropics was in the land and the air, and beauty blossomed early at its touch.

"You said *it*, Mr. Carson; surely that means something."

She was speaking with delightfully increasing earnestness. She had laid her hand upon his arm, a perfect thing in its small, shapely outlines, tenderly fleshed and dimpled as a baby's. Oh, she was delightfully fresh and guilelessly artful; what luck that fellow Gering had!

"What happened, Mr. Carson? You said it was fifteen years since *it* happened."

"You see, it was in Washington. Maybe you don't know, but Gering is richer than is decently Christian; he simply has money that he doesn't know what to do with; always had it, had it then. But he never was much with the girls, the buds, I mean; and, somehow, Mathew did not

fancy second blossom. But, with the mothers, they simply adored him; they flung themselves at his feet, holding out in their supplicating arms their choicest daughters. So he fished around Washington for several seasons; a good fellow, I wouldn't say a word against Gering if it were to save my life—we've always been friends. He was just fatal with the maters. An old woman with a daughter never looked at him but he aroused all the motherly-in-law instincts in her breast. One winter Congressman Reeves, from somewhere out West or down South, put in an appearance with a crafty-eyed old wife and a pink carnation of a daughter. It was another case of Gering's fatal son-in-law charms. And the girl found herself hustled within a foot of the altar before she realized it, her mother doing it all; some of the fellows said that Gering in the dark often thought he was kissing Alice—that was the girl's name—when it was the old lady's cheek he was caressing."

He stopped to survey Geneva for a moment. Her beauty, her grace, the delight of the situation stimulated him; it was like playing upon some fine instrument.

"I said the girl found herself about at the altar railing before she knew it. She was heart and soul wrapped up in a fine young fellow in the army, Lieutenant Conner, a friend of mine, too. But the wedding was all set, the cards out, and I was to be Gering's best man—you see, we had been friends so long, and I love old Mat to this day."

"You say she loved some one else," Geneva murmured.

"Yes, Conner; and Conner loved her more than she loved him, if such a thing were possible. I hated to see the girl's mother wrecking their lives and Gering's too—it can't be any paradise for a man to find himself married to a woman who loves some other chap."

Geneva's feet came to a quick stop. She was very pale. "And then, and then?" she urged breathlessly.

"Conner was in the army, and he had to have some respect for appearances; they are not quite as free moral agents as most fellows are. So I helped him out, he and Alice practically eloped; but we

fixed it up rather decently for them; but it did make poor Gering look in a cheap box. Poor Mat, I don't think he has wholly forgiven me to this day!"

Carson was watching the girl's face as an engineer might keep his eye on the steam gauge. "Oh, hang it, now," he said, "you have wormed the whole thing out of me! It takes you women to make a man tell all he knows, and make him tell it without knowing it."

He saw the deathly whiteness of her face, the drawn features, the blazing eyes. Carson burst into a torrent of self-condemnation. But the girl seemed deaf to his words. As he opened her gate, she turned to him, hesitating in the words for her question. "What—how did Mr. Gering take his disappointment—did he, was he much grieved?"

"No, Mathew does not get hopeless over anything in this world. He takes things awfully seriously, I'll admit; but, when he gets out of sorts, he sets to carving wood. I believe he still keeps a work-bench in his house."

It was some days before Mathew walked across the lawn to see his betrothed, and when he greeted her she sat before him in stolid silence. He stood regarding her with growing wonder. At length she turned quickly to him, her small hands raised almost to her shoulders.

"Mathew, look me in the eyes," she said tragically. "Have you, have you told me everything? Is there nothing you are holding back?"

The question amused him, and he kept his smiling eyes on her set face.

"Have you told me everything, everything?"

"I don't know as I have told you anything," he said slowly.

"Is there not something I should know?"

"No, there isn't; and, if there were, I shouldn't tell you."

"But I must know your past," she persisted.

"What's this, Genevra? French novels? Looking for a past behind me, are you?" He stood back, regarding her curiously, like a parent watching some caper of a spoiled child. "Looking for a past be-

hind me!" He laughed. "Well, Genevra, since you've pressed me to the wall, I'll tell the dreadful truth—I haven't a past."

But it was all serious with the girl. "I could never forgive a deception, Mathew," she said in a strained voice.

"What have you been reading lately?" he asked. He shook his head. "It's best, Genevra, to confine yourself to the straight old Anglo-Saxon story, the lovers, their trials, and the good, old end, the wedding."

"Mathew, our happiness depends more than you realize upon your telling me."

He drew his chair nearer her, and he took her hand. The light of confidence leaped up and beamed happily behind Genevra's eyes.

"Maybe you women," he said, "think you ought to hear something blood-curdling about a man before you can marry him."

"I can forgive you anything, Mathew."

"I fear I must disappoint you. I don't want to play the Pharisee, to say I am not as other men; but, really, I've no past wrong-doing to confess."

Rising to her feet, she glared into his astonished eyes; but the tears welling up broke the heat of her anger. She drew her hand angrily from his and dashed from the room.

Genevra said the roses were sweetest at nightfall—that they drowsed with open eyes. It grew her custom at the approach of evening to gather great bunches of the luscious bloom in the garden behind the house. She would fill her room with the flowers—they quieted her nerves, put her to sleep, she said.

Genevra was in her rose garden. Twilight had just settled over the earth, and a round moon would soon rise over the ridge on the east. Something touched the girl, the great masses of pink and purpled clouds floating in the lighted sky, the warm south breeze that blew in her face, the great stretches of mountains, their darkening mists—a wildness, a madness, seemed to possess her. Through the windows of Mathew's workroom she caught sight of him bending over a bench—carving wood! Her lips curled at the sight. Carving wood, still trying to forget



DRAWN BY VICTOR R. LAMBDIN

"Genevra was in her rose garden."

Alice; and, in her heart, she said she hated him.

Something stirred in the bushes beside her, and the girl started. It was Caesar. Ralph Carson followed the dog into the garden. Genevra flushed as he came toward her, and the scissors fell with a ring on the gravel at her feet. Ralph took the heavy blooms from her hands, and he buried his face in their cold petals. Something in the act fascinated her, its intensity, the force with which he drew the flowers toward him, the eagerness of burning thirst.

"I've heard," the man commenced, "that roses are your Lethe, your lotus, and you drown yourself to sleep in their fumes."

She flushed deeper at Carson's speech, fearing to answer. He saw her hesitancy, and it emboldened him. Her cloak was lying on a bench near by, and he took it and carefully wrapped its folds about her. As yet she had not opened her lips. She sank as if exhausted upon the bench. With a gentle impulse he raised her to her feet and then he turned the bench.

"The western view is preferable," he said.

"Yes, but we can see the moon rise," she persisted.

"Yes, and Mathew carving wood," he laughed. "My muscles ache when I see Mathew carving wood."

Ralph carried the bench under the shadow of a rose-enmeshed trellis, and they seated themselves with their faces toward the west. The moon

rose and wiped out with light the fevered sky and the sharp-edged range; but the figures on the bench had their faces turned to each other, and the man's eyes could only see the rose shadows nodding on the girl's white frock.

"How I have seen Mathew carving wood! Fifteen years ago," and she heard him laugh, "he carved wood fifteen years ago, night and day—carved, carved, carved—it was an orgy, a wassail of wood carving. It was wine, woman and song to him."

He touched her arm quickly. "Have you seen his Lares?"

"Yes," she answered. "They are in the billiard room."

Carson did not reply. She waited impatiently, to ask at length, "What of them?"

"Oh, nothing, if Mathew has not told you."

"When did he carve them, just when?" she pleaded.

He waived the question playfully; but the girl was in a tremor of earnestness. She laid her hand upon his sleeve.

"Just after *it* happened?" she questioned anew.

"If you are to make this a cross-examination, just after. When every one was wondering how he was standing it, when he would not see his best friends, there he was at his bench, formulating those *Lares*." Carson's laugh broke out again. "Strange he should choose *Lares* for his subject just then!"

"Genevra, Genevra," Mrs. Durphin was standing on the rear porch, looking over the garden. "Genevra, Genevra," she called again.

The girl would have risen, but Ralph gently held her. She glanced to him, and he shook his head. Mrs. Durphin stood doubting for a minute more before she turned into the house. She had not seen them in the shadow of the trellis.

Genevra's bewildered ears drank in each word from Carson's lips. It was the sweetness of the forbidden. It was another world, a world neither good nor wholesome, that he brought before her eyes; but it held with the charm of fascination.

"We were stationed at Honolulu at the time"—she heard his voice, mellow, of changing notes, of harmony as soothing as the flood of moonlight about them—"I met her. She had beauty, wonderful beauty, slanting great almond eyes, pursed lips, and gold and carmine cheeks—something dazzling to the Caucasian with his eyes trained to regularity of feature and whiteness of flesh. Her mother was Hawaiian, the father Japanese, and she had the best of both. They had social position. It is hard for you to understand it; but the race mixture did not count against her. One sister was the wife of a German nobleman, another was married to an officer in the British navy, all of them dear, sweet, clinging little wives. They were wealthy. Each had her own

large dower; but one thought nothing of that—it was their beauty and their sweet dispositions."

The girl's eyes were fastened upon the man's face, the square jaw, the broad chin with a dimple that was a cleft, the coal-black hair, the deep, burning eyes.

"I married her," Carson said, and Genevra's skirts rustled with an imperceptible shrinking.

"Poor girl," he said, and Geneva hardly breathed through the story; and he told of the awakening that came too late, the first sight of his child, his blood in an inferior race, the remorse that clung tight to his heart. And his wife, "poor girl," he always called her, breathing the words in a breath that was half a sigh. "Poor girl," he went on, "she died three years after our marriage. I had grief, but no regrets. Then when I laid the babe away beside its mother, it was relief—a folly, a madness of mid-tropics, was at an end. Poor girl, poor girl, she was always sweet and dear to me," and he sprang to his feet and walked down the rows of reeking roses.

Genevra felt the trickling of something cold upon her cheeks. She raised her hand. They were tears.

Carson returned and took his seat beside her. Her eyes could not leave his face—the thing of Oriental beauty, the almond eyes, dark and slanting, the gold-touched flesh, the babe—all came before her—the life, the strange, weird air, and the mystery of the man, unholy and compelling.

Ralph laid his hand upon Genevra's, and she shrank from him in delicious horror. He felt the tremor that ran through her frame at his touch, and it sent the dark blood mantling deeper on his brown cheeks. "Pure and white you are, pure and white," he breathed in her ear; "foreign to me as lilies in a bandit's hands. But that is what I want, what I must possess—pure lilies, white lilies; and I will hold them in these stained hands." She felt the crush of his hot fingers over her helpless hands.

A light step on the gravel brought Genevra to her feet with a start. Her mother was standing before her, surveying Carson with angry disdain. Mrs. Dur-

phin took her daughter by the arm. "Genevra," she said, hurrying her steps up the path, "Mathew has been waiting for you for nearly an hour."

Ralph stood staring after them. Genevra went first into the house. Mrs. Durphine paused to throw a withering glance back to the garden. From his screen of shadow, Carson flung a kiss to her tall, commanding figure. "Here's to you, my ally," he said, "my kindest, most effective confederate. May you continue, and may I prosper in your blindness."

Carson did not seem wholly at his ease as Catherine ushered him into Mathew's presence. It was the workroom, and Ralph glanced at the bench, at the many tools.

"Carving wood?" he asked, and a tight-lipped smile swept half-willingly across his face.

"Yes, I'm whittling," and Mathew looked up with a leer that showed his canine teeth, an ugly, hating glance; and something in its glare made Carson wince—as near as Carson could do anything of the kind.

"Maybe you'll order me out of the house, Gering, when you hear the purport of my call. But I've come to beg you to do something about the dog."

"Caesar?"

"Yes, can't you set some figure on him?"

Again the smile with the canine teeth; and Carson felt rather uneasy.

"The dog simply will not leave me, Gering, and I can't take him on his own cognizance. It's barefaced robbery, don't you know?"

"So you want to buy Caesar?"

"Yes."

"Caesar is not for sale."

"Well, then, chain him at home."

"No, he's foot-free. He is my dog, not my property."

"He wants to abide under my roof-tree, Gering."

"Very well."

"That's all very fine, old man; but I'm going away, and I think Caesar has made up his mind to go with me."

"He may. He has inalienable rights, like the rest of us."

"Yes, I suppose pursuit of happiness and choice of masters."

"Yes."

"But I hate awfully, Gering, to take him like this. It's deuced mean of you not to do something to make me feel comfortable in the matter. I feel like a thief, don't you see?"

Carson watched Gering narrowly. "Oh, I say, Mat, can't you do something for me here?"

Mathew began to sharpen a little grooved knife. "I can't see anything for me to do," he said, after a minute's reflection.

"Well, then, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'm going East. It's a habit to go to the bench shows, and I'll look over some good kennels besides. If I see a dog possessed of domestic virtues, who has the love-of-home bump on his head abnormally developed, I'll express him to you on the spot, a barter for Caesar."

Mathew went on sharpening the gouge. "So, I'll say good-by."

Mathew did not disengage his hands from their task.

"Still taking life seriously, Mat? Will you ever learn the joke of it?"

"Perhaps not," replied Mathew; "but don't worry about me, Carson—I have wood carving, you know."

Mathew stood beside the bench. He worked upon a large disc of wood; it was pencil-marked, and lined. Compasses, delicate tools, and instruments were lying about, and shavings littered the floor.

Mrs. Durphine burst into the room. She was not quite herself—the pallor of her face, the red rims of her eyes. She hurried to Mathew with extended hands. "Oh, Mathew, Mathew!" she was wailing, "it's a woeful message I bring you. I'm crushed, broken-hearted."

Gering said nothing, but waited.

"Genevra has eloped with the man you introduced into the family!"

He went on with his work.

"Mathew, can't we stop them? She's just gone. If I had got her note two minutes sooner, I could have kept her back if I had to hold her by the hair of her head."

Mrs. Durphine waited a moment for Mathew's response. There was none, and she went on, "In an hour more their



DRAWN BY VICTOR R. LAMBDIN

"Genevra's bewildered ears drank in each word from Carson's lips."

train will reach Los Angeles; can't we stop them, telegraph, have the sheriff bring her home?"

Mathew shook his head calmly. "There is nothing to do," he said; and Mrs.

Durphin's restraint was ended. She burst into tears and sobs.

"The deceit, the willfulness of her, the ingratitude," the woman wailed, "the deceit, the falsity——!"



DRAWN BY VICTOR R. LAMBDIN

"Matthew, can't we stop them?"

But Mathew raised his hand. "Not deceit," he said firmly.

Mrs. Durphin watched with fixed eyes while he took a package from the drawer of his desk. She saw the ring, the betrothal gifts—they were all there, and

there was a letter, too, it was written days before, and Mathew was released from his engagement.

The woman's face grew purple, and she rose grandly to her feet. "This is more than she has confided to her mother,"

she said, as if Mathew had in some way injured her. She paused, standing in the doorway. "I'm sure I'm not to blame, Mr. Gering; I did all in my power to bring about your marriage to my daughter."

Mathew smiled. "Yes, Mrs. Durphin, you did, you surely did," and the mother felt there was more bitterness than praise in his words.

Mathew went back to his work on the disc, and for three hours he sketched in the design. Mrs. Durphin burst again into the library. "My daughter has returned to me," she said when she found her breath.

Mathew's pencil came to a quick stop. "She has returned alone," Mrs. Durphin said the next moment.

Mathew looked up sharply. The pencil paused definitely in his hand.

"She has not married your friend, Mr. Carson."

Mathew laid the pencil down.

"She took the next train home; left your friend the minute their train reached Los Angeles."

Mathew rose and looked out a window.

"Genevra says nothing on earth could make her marry Ralph Carson. She says her eyes were opened the minute after she took the step; she didn't love him."

Mathew went back to the bench and resolutely took up his pencil.

The woman rose uneasily. Her eyes looked the question that struggled on her tongue. True, Mathew's cheek was a little paled, the lips firmer set; but his steady hand, his fixed eyes—she could not understand the man.

Mrs. Durphin hesitated another minute before she turned to go.

"I am pleased," Mathew said, "I am very glad, Mrs. Durphin, that you have not lost your daughter."

It was toward evening when Mathew

stepped upon the veranda. Caesar came crouching to him. The man's face brightened at the sight of the dog, and a curious smile raised his lips when he saw a fragment of chain hanging from the St. Bernard's collar. He did not look at the dog, nor let the amber eyes catch his; but he bent down and examined the last link in the chain. It was broken, the rivet torn from its sockets by the powerful wrenching of the big body. Caesar tried to lick his master's hand, but his head was roughly pushed aside.

Mathew gave the last finishing touch to the design upon the wooden disc. He held it out, regarding it with critical admiration. The low moaning of Caesar on the veranda seemed to distract him, and he closed the door nervously. Through the window the dog's voice pleaded, with now and then a hesitating scratch upon the panel. It seemed to unnerve Mathew strangely. For weeks he had begged in vain for a word or look of forgiveness. Poor dog! Catherine said he was eating nothing, only ~~drinking~~ water; and his eyes were red, as if scalded by the unshed tears. Over on the Durphin veranda Genevra sat, shawl-wrapped in her chair. She was pale and wan-cheeked from her illness, and her mother and the white-capped nurse vainly watched her face for a smile or a light of interest in her eyes.

Again the low moaning reached Mathew. He rose and opened the door.

"Caesar, Caesar," he softly called.

The dog came slowly forward, and Mathew reached down his arms and clasped them about his tawny neck. He stood for a moment irresolutely—poor Caesar, poor Genevra; they had eaten of the tree of knowledge, and it was time they should be forgiven. Then, calling the dog to follow him, Mathew crossed the lawn to the Durphin cottage.

Miss Lady's Fan

BY JULIA TRUITT BISHOP

Ma' Liza's day had begun in calamity. When Aunt Clasy, big and black and with arms akimbo, asked searching questions, Ma' Liza knew from experience that wrath was at hand. This memorable occasion had begun in an absolute nothing—a mere lump of sugar. Never before had Ma' Liza dreamed that her mother counted the lumps of sugar.

"You needn't set dere wallin' dem eyes at me!" said Aunt Clasy in the most personal manner. "Dat lump was in de sugar bowl when I tooked it offen de table las' night, an' it ain't dere now. Growed up into a thief, has ye?—an'naix' thing my white folks'll be thinkin' Clasy's stealin' deir sugar. Come right along out into de woods wid me, wher' Miss Lady cain't hear you a-squawlin' an' tek de switch away, lak what she done las' time—for you gwineter hab mighty good reason to squawl in about two minutes."

And Ma' Liza immediately rent the air with prophetic shrieks, for Miss Lady might perchance hear and come to the rescue once more. But Miss Lady did not come, and Ma' Liza was haled to the woods, where punishment was meted out with impartial hand, not only for the lump of sugar but for the untimely yells, which had been a diplomatic failure.

"I ain' neber took so much as a rag from my white folks," Aunt Clasy proclaimed severely, when she had the culprit once more in the corner of the kitchen, sobbing, but resolved upon honesty henceforth. "Dat jes' de reason de white folks ain't got no use for de mos' o' dese no'-count, ornary niggers roun' here. Dat Jane Lawson would 'a' bowdaciouslly kep' my madam's shut wais' out o' de wash las' week ef I hadn't gone ober dere an' tol' 'er I'd bus' 'er wide open if she didn't gib it up—pizen nigger! You neber gits to be a nigger, Ma' Liza, tell you gits black on de inside. Dey ain't one o' dem thiefs in de jail but what begun wid little things, lak lumps o' sugar," said Aunt Clasy impressively, feeling that she ought to have a larger audience; and then she added with

definite warning: "I tell ye right now, Ma' Liza, you got to de place where you gotter stop. Ef I ketches you stealin' ag'in I's a-gwineter beat you, sho' nough!"

Ma' Liza gasped and rolled her frightened eyes. If this last were not a sure enough beating, what would that kind of beating be? Certainly the way of the transgressor was hard when Aunt Clasy had him to deal with.

Her silence appeased the wrath of Aunt Clasy, who went on with her work after her own fashion. The kitchen window commanded a view of the grounds, down to the beach, and of a little boat which was working its slow way shoreward. Two people were in the boat. Aunt Clasy's black face clouded at sight of them.

"Ef dat ain't too bad o' Miss Lady, to be a-actin' dat away," she commented aloud. "Dere she was, all de evenin' las' night, a-walkin' up an' down wid dat Mr. Lane—I cain't abear dat man!—an' here was Mas' Frank settin' all by hisself in de gal'ry. Ef 'er pa knowed Miss Lady was a-actin' dat away he'd come down here an' bus' up 'er house-party wid de hatchet. Mr. Lane, too! Ef Miss Lady wanted to fuss wid Mas' Frank, why didn't she tell 'im so, an' let 'im go 'long back to town? 'Stid o' dat, dere she is flaunterin' roun' wid dat Lane man, an' Mas' Frank settin' all by his lone. An' Mas' Frank worth a barnyard full o' sech as him, any day! Ef I gits a chance to talk to Miss Lady I sho' is gwineter mek her sorry she been a-cuttin' up lak what she has!"

A corner of the front veranda with the wide steps was within Aunt Clasy's view. A man came down those steps, dress-suit case in hand. Giving his burden to Jake, the boy, he turned to say good-bye to a lady on the upper step.

"Yes, it is rather sudden," he said easily, though his face was white. "I hadn't expected to be called away so soon. Make my adieux to Nellie, won't you? I can't wait for her to come in, for I should miss my train. And I have cer-

tainly had a most enjoyable time—I am greatly indebted to you——”

There were more of the commonplaces of farewell on his side, and of regret on the part of the lady. He hurried away, waving good-bye to Aunt Clasy at the kitchen window. He had always been good friends with Aunt Clasy.

The black face looked forth toward the little boat, which had come close to shore and then sheered away again. The young lady in the boat had evidently witnessed the departure, and knew what it meant.

“Dat Miss Lady sho’ is de wuss sp’iled chile I eber has seed!” cried Aunt Clasy with vindictive emphasis. “Gone an’ drub Mas’ Frank off, an’ goin’ a-pyrootin’ off in a boat wid dat Mr. Lane! I dunno what anybody want to raise chillern fur, nohow! Miss Lady’s ma always hab say dat Miss Lady plum sho’ to do what nobody wa’n’t expectin’ er to do;—an’ wid all de men in de whole kentry in lub wid ’er she sho’ to go all de way t’rough de woods an’ pick up a crooked stick at las’. An’ dat man sho’isa crooked stick. An’ out o’ de whole bilin’ I pick out Mas’ Frank, from de fus’. He ain’t got much money, but he ack lak a gen’leman wid what he got, anyhow, an’ dat’s more’n anybody can say fur dat man Lane. My lan’, Miss Lady sho’ do mek me wil’, wid ’er ca’ins on!”

Ma’ Liza had been watching and listening with bulging eyes. Hitherto she had worshiped Miss Lady without reference to her surroundings, but now everything was changed. Miss Lady had been walking and was now

boat-riding with that man Lane, while Mr. Frank was left alone. Now, Mas’ Frank, the lovely, the royal, the head of the whole house-party, had gone away, leaving Mr. Lane triumphant, with a clear field. Ma’ Liza gasped helplessly.

All day long, as Miss Lady laughed and talked and played tennis with Mr. Lane, she was attended by a small black shadow that went on her trail, unnoticed. Wherever Miss Lady went and whatever Miss Lady did, there followed and gazed Ma’ Liza. She saw when Mr. Lane came so close to pick up Miss Lady’s handkerchief and whispered something that made Miss Lady’s face turn red, and put the handkerchief into his own pocket—stealing a handkerchief, right before Miss Lady’s eyes! “I wisht Mammy had a-holt o’ him, oncet!” muttered Ma’ Liza. She forgot to go to her meals, and could not eat when she was there. Aunt Clasy’s conscience began to smite her sorely.



DRAWN BY HOWARD N. HEATH

“You needn’t set dere wallin’ dem eyes at me.”



DRAWN BY HOWARD N. HEATH

"You must tell me before I go."

"I done beat dat gal dis mawnin'," she said to herself, "an' she ain't hardly et a bite sence. Ef dere eber was a fool for lack o' sense dat fool is ol' Cla'sy. Come in here, honey chile. What mek you feel bad, Ma' Liza? Want a little lump o' sugar to put a good tas'e in your mouf?"

But Ma' Liza shuddered and declined. No more lumps of sugar for Ma' Liza. She knew when she had enough.

Miss Lady's dress gleamed white among the shadows at the end of the long veranda, and she played aimlessly with her white fan. Mr. Lane was close at hand, leaning

over her and whispering low-voiced nothings. The time and the place and the loved one were all three near. Who could blame him if he took advantage of such an auspicious meeting?

"And you do love me—a little—I am sure of it," he insisted. "And you must tell me before I go. Think of it—in ten minutes, now, I must leave you—and tomorrow afternoon I sail for Germany—and I must have my answer, Nellie. Here—I have no card—let me write my address on your fan—and write me in the morning, won't you, dearest love?—so that I will receive your answer before my ship sails. And let it be yes, Nellie—you will surely make it yes!"

They arose and walked back toward the group at the hall door. Something slipped to the floor unheeded, as they

went, and the next moment a little black figure had thrown itself upon the something, had wriggled down the steps and was under the house, panting and big-eyed in the shadows.

Now Miss Lady couldn't write to that Lane man! Now she would simply *have* to take Mas' Frank!

And then came a revelation.

"Hit's a' open-an'-shet fan!" whispered Ma' Liza.

Away in the dark, under the house, Ma' Liza sat up very straight, fanning herself with an open-and-shut fan.

On the veranda, above her head, there

was a stir of departure, and Mr. Lane was going, and gone. Then a light step went back and forth.

"I must have dropped my fan somewhere out here," said Miss Lady's disturbed voice. "Has any one noticed it?—a white satin fan?"

And Ma' Liza listened, and fanned with the open-and-shut fan.

Away at the other end of the house, the light gleamed redly from the kitchen window, where Aunt Clasy was cleaning up. Ma' Liza glanced in that direction, but she did not restore the fan to its owner. After me, the deluge.

The house stood high from the ground. Ma' Liza climbed up on a box, and laid the fan far back on a wide beam, out of sight.

Miss Lady was out early the next morning, but Ma' Liza was earlier. She saw Miss Lady come out and look anxiously here and there, wherever her steps had led the night before, seeking for her lost fan. Miss Lady was looking particularly willful.

"Ef she fin' dat fan, she gwine write to dat Lane man dat she gwine hab 'im," said Ma' Liza to herself.

Therefore it was not best for Miss Lady to find the fan.

Besides—it was an open-and-shut fan. All her life Ma' Liza had desired an open-and-shut fan with a mighty longing.

And it was *not* best for Miss Lady to have this fan.

"Ef you ain't no better in de mawnin', I's a-gwineter see if dat Jane Lawson ain't been cunjering' my gal," said Aunt Clasy darkly, as the day wore on.

"I ain't been cunjered," declared Ma' Liza. "I jes' laks to play unner de house."

Miss Lady was on what Aunt Clasy called "her high hawse" all that day. Her mother and such of the guests as came near her found her utterly impossible; and when the mother undertook to say something about Mr. Frank, Miss Lady tossed her wicked little head and proclaimed that she hoped she would never hear his name again, that she was tired of

him, and that if he had stayed any longer it would have forced her to go back to town, as she found him quite unendurable. Then she shut herself up in her room and wept; then she laughed and flirted outrageously with a blushing boy whose mustache was as yet only a prophecy; then she flew back to her room all at once and called for Ma' Liza.

Ma' Liza wept as to her doom. What was going to be done with her? She felt that Miss Lady had crept under the house and stood up on the box and found the white satin fan, the open-and-shut fan, lying on the very back of the big beam.

Miss Lady was scribbling with all her might, and her face was flushed and her eyes were wet.



DRAWN BY HOWARD N. HEATH

"Ma' Liza listened."



DRAWN BY HOWARD N. HEATH

"Miss Lady was scribbling with all her might."

"Here, Ma' Liza, call Jake to take that to Frank—I mean to the postoffice," she called, before she had the letter fairly sealed. "Tell him to hurry and catch the up-train."

She was going to send for Mr. Frank to come back. Truly, white folks were amazing in all their ways. This morning she would have written to that Lane man, if she could have found the fan; and now she was going to send for Mas' Frank to come back. Ma' Liza delivered the letter to Jake, feeling that it meant the stroke of doom for her.

She stole under the house, to thrust an eager hand to the top of the old beam, for one blissful last time. No one was looking. Ma' Liza sat on the box and waved the scented fan back and forth. She held her head high, as she had seen Miss Lady do. She tossed a weird "face" over her left shoulder toward Mr. Lane, who might be supposed to be going away; but to Mas' Frank, on the other side, she whispered;

"Dey ain't no use o' you gwine away lak dat—you jes' stay hyar an' talk to me. I don't keer nuffin' fur dat Lane man, nohow. You stay hyar, Mas' Frank."

There was the step of a new arrival on the veranda above her head, and Ma' Liza heard a little shriek.

"Oh, Frank!" Miss Lady was saying; "I have just written you a note to come back—you didn't receive it so soon, surely!" And Mr. Frank was replying: "I have not received any note, dearest—but I felt that I must come back. I couldn't help it, Nellie!"

Ma' Liza sat forlorn, under the furthest wisteria vine, and watched Miss Lady and her lover wandering about in the seventh heaven of peace and joy. It was late, and the dinner bell had sounded, but what did Miss Lady care for that? She was like a new Miss Lady—her face was flushed, and there were traces of tears on her pretty lashes. They wandered near Ma' Liza without seeing her, and, knowing what lay before her, Ma' Liza broke into a wail.

"Why, Ma' Liza, what in the world is the matter?" cried Miss Lady, bending

kindly down. This was such a happy world that she could afford to be gentle with everything in it. Mr. Frank looked on with an amused smile.

"I gotter gib back your fan," wailed Ma' Liza, the picture of despair. "I gotter gib back your open-an'-shet fan!"

Miss Lady started and half arose. She glanced at Frank.

"Did you find my fan?" she asked.

"Nome—I stole it," said Ma' Liza, with fresh sobs. "I pick it up soon as you drap it, 'cause I didn't want you writin' to dat Lane man what write his name on it, and de place where he stayin'—'cause I done pick out Mas' Frank for you, an' so has Mammy—an' hit's a open-an'-shet fan, an' I don't want to gib it back. I been always a-wantin' a open-an'-shet fan—an' I want to keep hit!"

Ma' Liza abandoned herself to despair, and threw herself down on the grass. Miss Lady's face was very red, and she stood there a moment, her eyes falling before Mas' Frank's. Then she knelt down beside the writhing figure on the grass.

"Ma' Liza," she said softly, "I am very glad you took the fan, because you kept me from doing something very foolish—and making myself—and some one else—very miserable—but it was very wrong for you to take it. When you want open-and-shut fans you must come and ask me, hereafter. And I am going to begin by giving this to you—for your very own!"

Ma' Liza sat up and gazed, and her mouth opened with what was going to be an uncomprehending grin. But it closed with another wail.

"Mammy'll neber b'lieve it," she sobbed. "An' she say she gwineter beat me sho' 'nough naix' time I steal!"

"Come along—we'll go and conyince her," suggested Mas' Frank, who was smiling very tenderly at Miss Lady; and they went together to the oblong of light where Aunt Cla'sy was looking forth anxiously for her child.

"How do you do, Aunt Cla'sy?" said Mr. Frank, shaking hands genially and leaving something shining in her palm; and Miss Lady looked around with a delighted snif.

"How nice everything is in here, Aunt Cla'sy! I haven't been out here for a long time. Oh—I just wanted to tell you that I have given this fan to Ma' Liza—all her own!"

Aunt Cla'sy stood for a moment, speechless—then she made a start at her dazed offspring.

"What you gwineter say?—ain't

you got no manners?" she demanded.

The bewildered amazement in Ma' Liza's face suddenly spread into a smile, full of gleaming teeth.

"Thanky-ma'm!" said Ma' Liza.

Her head was up. She sat down and waved her fan—at last her own open-and-shut fan—before Aunt Cla'sy's face.

The Little Store Between

BY E. E. GARNETT

"No, sorr," said Mrs. Magrath, and a pause followed.

Not that Brereton was at all minded to retreat. He was simply considering how high a price might serve. The place was a poor enough place. He rested an elbow on the worn little old counter, and glanced about him with a kindly, puzzled amusement over the negative.

The only visible *raison d'être* was a showcase of penny sweets, taffy especially, the glass of it cracked often and patched with paper, as was the glass of the window. A clue to this damage was in certain excoriations scattered over the floor and counter and all available woodwork, etchings easily recognized as the work of Barlow knives. Brereton's mind drifted to the chatter of his young brothers, who lived near by.

"The taffy's great," they had informed him.

"And she can spin a yarn, Mrs. Magrath can, yes, *sir*."

"Irish yarn, eh?"

"Oh, always Irish and always old."

"Fairies, eh? And Saint Patrick?"

"And roast pratinis and a wee bit shanty; and a pig and a green and a spring and children; and all in Tipp'rary County, away off between the great river and the great sea."

Brereton called back his mind, and frowned.

"You let your young customers take great liberties," he said.

"Sure, it's no harrm they do," said Mrs. Magrath, and smiled over the scars upon

her house. "An' they do be gran' company, the chil'der."

"Well,"—he let the pause go—"well, you have me at a very awkward halt, Mrs. Magrath. You see, I have bought the lots on each side, and am ready to build."

"It's sorry I am," said the little taffy woman.

"But," went on Brereton, half laughing, half annoyed at the rocky look of her, so serene and polite and unapproached, "wouldn't any reasonable or even unreasonable price—?"

"Not any price at all at all," she put in.

"But consider," he urged. "You will be so uncomfortable, so overshadowed; had you thought of that? Now you have all the sun there is, no shadow in the square but your own. It is very pleasant. I noticed as I came along the nasturtiums trailing out of your upper window."

"They do be growin' fine, sorr," she admitted it, and smiled on him.

"Exactly. But with a wall on each side—"

"Sure," she broke in, "me front will be open?"

"Certainly. But you are back some yards from the sidewalk, while my houses will run close forward. They'll be bulky things, a real nuisance to you; and as to the business—" he paused with a deprecating glance at the penny sweets.

"There'll be candies," she asked quickly, "in the big houses?"

He explained apologetically that a department store keeps everything.

"An' the walls," she said, on a sudden

anxious. "They wouldn't be after shuttin' me lamp? Sure, it'll shine up street an' down to the ould corner?"

Brereton shook his head. "I'm afraid," he said, "that it will be rather closed in." Then he hurried on to the price again, in good-natured sympathy for her discomfiture. "It shall be whatever you say," he assured her. "You are not, surely, so attached to this lonely little house that you could not be happy in a better one?"

"It's little ye know, sorr," said the taffy woman. There was a touch of scorn in her troubled eyes. Suddenly Brereton realized that his price, any price, was an intrusion.

"I beg your pardon," he said contritely, and came away.

Later, as the building went on, he wrote to ask right of way overhead, which was granted with a gentle word of regret that anything had been refused.

So there came the great houses on either side the little one, and a graceful arch curved over to connect them. There were deep shadows about. The nasturtiums in the small upper window took on paler tints.

The walls that shut out the sun touched the taffy trade, too. There were no vacant lots now for games, and the young folk shied away from the style and shadow of the big buildings. And perhaps a bit of the shadow got into the Irish stories.

Meantime upon Brereton, too, had come a change.

He had met Nora Sedley.

"You know very little about me," said Nora when he asked her to marry him.

"I know that I love you," answered Brereton.

"Does nothing else matter?"

"Oh, it matters whether you love me."

"Nothing else?"

"Nothing."

But his social circle went into a flutter of dismay.

"The Sedleys adopted her. Yes, but who *was* she?" so ran one whisper.

"It isn't that we know anything," went another, "it is that we *don't* know anything."

"Mystery about a woman——" The circle shivered.

All of which ruffled Brereton not in the

least. He watched to see that Nora's eyes were unclouded, and let the circle shiver to its content. Indeed, nothing came of the shivers. Nora was young and bewitching, and easily won right of way. The whispers had always been aside, and they soon grew unfashionable before the fashion of Nora and Nora's gowns.

On the wedding morning she had gone to Mrs. Sedley, pale and shaken, her eyes an agony of indecision.

"My dear," said the motherly woman, "tell him."

"Think!"

"But, child, good cannot come of hiding."

"He would love me still."

"Yes. Let him."

"Yes, let him love me—and not pity me. Remember how it would hurt him to pity me. And for me—Oh, isn't his faith punishment enough even for me?"

That was the only breakdown any one saw. The silence once decided, she set her heart away from everything but Brereton's happiness, which grew daily a more radiant success.

He was amused and delighted that she so soon conquered the circle.

"Seymour," he told her one day, with the usual smile of content, "wants to paint your portrait."

"Isn't that a great compliment?"

"Well, it would be to any other woman; but Princess Nora can compliment him." She whitened with the sudden terror that came sometimes for all her watchful self-command.

"Oh, I wonder," she said softly, "if God is taking care about you."

"It looks that way," said Brereton. "He has given you to me."

"And He must know," said the princess, "know you, and know—me," which comforted her for a time.

Being thus royally delighted with life, Brereton grew more tender of the commonplace folk—those who had troubles and no princesses. Presently he remembered the shadowed little taffy woman. So that morning he ordered placards hung in his Candy Department.

Get Taffy,

Great Taffy!

At the Little Store Between.

He smiled, thinking how astonished the little, lonely, obstinate woman would be over her sudden rush of trade.

Now, he had never chanced to mention the shanty store to Nora. The main entrance to his building was on the other street, and until the day of the placards very few people had noticed the shut-in place. He supposed she had not. But driving past one morning, he saw her before the shadowed window.

"Have you lost your carriage, Princess?" he asked laughingly as he sprang down to her. "Will you ride in mine?"

"Thank you," said Princess Nora, "I am tired."

"You are ill," cried Brereton, as he saw her face.

"No. But let us go home." She was pale and silent nearly all the way.

"That is a quaint little shop shut in there," was what she finally said. "Why didn't you buy it?"

"Ah, I see you don't know my friend Mrs. Magrath, Princess."

"I peeped in the window at her."

"Well, that's about all I've done; but I have my suspicions."

"Of—of her?"

"Yes. I fancy she has a story tucked away, a story better than those she tells. I fancy she's keeping tryst."

"Yes?" whispered Nora, and breathed quickly.

Brereton went on to tell how his prices had been refused, and how Mrs. Magrath wanted her lamp to shine up street and down. He was presently dismayed utterly to have Nora fall against him with a burst of passionate sobs.

"You are ill," he protested.

"My heart hurts," sobbed Princess Nora.

After that Brereton noticed—though he told himself there was no rhyme or reason for noticing—that they drove often past the little store. That street was seldom the shortest way for them, but the coachman had acquired a knack of getting into it, especially to and from evening entertainments.

Because he felt that Nora did, Brereton looked out for the little store light. Mrs. Magrath's lamp was a large one, very carefully kept, and it made her window and walled-in entrance very bright.

"You like this street," said Brereton one night as the carriage turned in.

"I told Barkley to take it when it is near, instead of the noisier ones," explained Nora.

"Barkley is quite ingenious," said Brereton with a smile, "about finding it near."

"Would you rather——?"

"Not a bit," interrupted Brereton. "Barkley and I are of one mind. You have only to direct us."

"Look," said Nora sharply. They had come before the lamp, but it was dark.

"Well," said Brereton simply—her hands reached out to him and were shaking—"what do you want me to do, Princess?"

"Take me to her," said Nora.

So they went up to the room of the nasturtiums, and were met on the threshold by Dr. Murphy.

"Ill?" asked Brereton.

"Dying," said the doctor.

Nora passed him swiftly. She put off her opera cloak as she went, and hurried the jeweled pins out of her hair. There was a little plaid shawl hung upon a hook in the wall. She took it and drew it over head and shoulders.

"Ah," said Dr. Murphy softly, "very gracious, very beautiful. Mrs. Brereton knows the poor woman's story?"

"Story!" repeated Brereton. He was a bit dazed with the pain of watching Nora.

"There was a daughter, you know," Dr. Murphy explained. "A lovely, wild young thing; and Refferton—perhaps you know Refferton?"

"Yes, I know him."

"Refferton saw her."

Across the little room the taffy woman had reached her arms to Nora. A great thanksgiving stirred the dying face.

"It's sorry ye are, wee bit crathure?"

"It's sorry I am," said Nora.

Brereton couldn't bear the look of her bowed head. Involuntarily he reached to snatch her away, but the doctor caught his arm.

"Let be," he urged eagerly. "She is playing the daughter, don't you understand? Making death easier for the poor mother, don't you see?"

"I see," said Brereton, and for a moment hid his face.

"A rare woman," went on the doctor, "and a great actress, my dear sir."

"I didn't know," Nora was saying, with her cheek against the taffy woman's, "that you had forgiven me. I didn't know, until just a little while ago—that you kept the light for me."

"Sich a wee bit crathure," sobbed the taffy woman. "Sure, God'll judge the black heart of him that took ye astray an' not be after hurtin' ye, acushla macree."

"Whist, now, whist," crooned Nora.

"Och thin, it's already sore hurted ye are, Mavourneen!"

"Whist, whist."

Dr. Murphy presently drew the dead arms from about her neck and Brereton carried her out.

When they were nearly home she raised her head to look at him. The little shawl was still about her shoulders, the bright hair hanging loose. The light of the street was good, and she read in his eyes, taken unaware, the sorrow he was feeling for her pain. She cried out sharply.

"Hush," said Brereton, and gently touched her lips. "Murphy says you are a great actress, wee bit crathure."

"Not when ye're hurted," sobbed Nora, "not when ye're so hurted."

The Trustfulness of Beckwith

BY RUTH DUTCHER

Jason Beckwith awoke suddenly to the oppressing blackness of the night, with that strange and yet familiar feeling that something was wrong. He sat upright in bed and listened for a moment. The heavy darkness, hemmed in by the low walls and ceiling of his room, seemed to bear down upon him and deaden his sense of hearing. It was only after a determined effort that he could hear the familiar ticking of the old-fashioned clock upon the mantel, which seemed to be running races with the same sound that came, though muffled, from his watch under the pillow. Everything seemed as usual, but still he sat listening, straining his eyes in vain to see. A faint odor as of heated metal gradually became apparent, but the sense of a presence other than his own made itself felt.

"Who's t-there?" he called. The trifling impediment in his speech came not from fear but from habit.

There was the sudden flash and then the steady, unwinking glare of a dark lantern, and a tall figure rose suddenly from a crouching position in the further corner of the room.

"By Jove!" it said. "It's Jason—it's little Bunny Beckwith. Don't shoot, old man. Don't you know me?"

"I can't very well shoot," replied Jason, "because my revolver is downstairs in the drawer of the library table; and your voice is familiar, but I can't quite recall—just let me t-turn on the electric, will you? That lantern is rather blinding."

He groped for a second on the wall at the side of his bed, found the button, and the room was suddenly filled with a soft light. The stranger carefully shut off his lantern, and removed a small black mask that fitted closely to the upper half of his face. He was a tall man; the bold, strong outlines of his forehead and the long, strong curve of jaw were animated by a pair of eyes which were always glancing restlessly about, seeming to see everything at once and resting on nothing very long. Beckwith stared at him curiously.

"Give me a moment," he said, "and I am sure to remember you. Why, you are—it can't be—T-tom Loring?"

"Tom it is," was the answer, "though not exactly the Tom that you knew so many years ago. If you will recollect, I was President of our class, my Junior year."

"Yes, yes," rejoined the other; "what a funny old world it is, t-to be sure!" He sat staring at the visitor, his hands



DRAWN BY EDGAR BERT SMITH

"That lantern is rather blinding."

clasped round his knees, his hair tossed and rumpled, and an expression of amazement in his round, blue eyes.

"Only," he continued, "you ought to wear that mask thing over the other part of your face. That jaw of yours, Tommy, is *t*-too prominent to be easily forgotten."

The two men stared at each other reflectively, seriously; then a look of amusement began to grow about the corners of Beckwith's mouth.

"I recollect," he went on, "our last meeting. You had secured a girl I wanted for some very particular social function, and I was distinctly angry.

But my grudge against you was drowned in the little supper we had down *t*-town that evening, when we swore eternal friendship and wept loudly on being forcibly parted for the night."

"That was nearly twenty years ago," said Loring thoughtfully, "and our fore-gathering to-night is—well, different." He stood at the side of the bed and looked down at Beckwith. "You were always such a confiding little chap, Beck," he said finally. "Wheneve I've thought of you, I've remembered the time that three of us got you to walk seven miles in that bad storm by telling you some beautiful and elaborate piece of fiction about—well, I've forgotten what it was about; but you were easy, Beck."

"I was," assented Beckwith cheerfully, "but what of it? Come downstairs and let me give you something to eat. We can *t*-talk better then."

He threw back the covers and touched one foot gingerly to the cold, bare floor. But Loring pressed him gently back on the pillows.

"If it's all the same to you," he said, "we'll stay here. Not that I'm averse to prowling about other people's houses in the night, but I'm not used to being escorted by my host. Besides, I'm not hungry."

"Oh, very well. Just *t*-toss me a pipe, will you? There are cigarettes and *t*-tobacco on the table. Light up, Tommy, and make yourself at home. And if you will open that cupboard over there, you will find something more substantial than smoke."

Loring foraged until he had found the tobacco, but shook his head at the contents of the cupboard.

"Not just now," he said, "though I won't deny that a man usually talks better with a glass in his hand. Here's your pipe, Beck; now let's be sociable." He sat down on the edge of the bed, tucked under his elbow the pillow Beckwith gave him, and lit a cigarette. The smoke curled up in light, thin clouds.

"Would you mind *t*-telling me," said Beckwith, as he examined critically the carving on his pipe—"I'm consumed with curiosity to know—how you came to be a—a—you are one, aren't you?"

"I am," answered Loring politely, "a full-fledged housebreaker, at your service. Why? Oh, I don't know; I just drifted this way. My talents seemed to lie in this direction."

"And—was it accident that you happened upon my place t-to-night?"

"Not entirely. I heard that you were to be alone, and determined to pay you a visit, though I didn't count on your receiving me. You awoke too soon, Beck; in another minute I should have left you."

"What would you have left me?" asked Beckwith ironically. "My watch, for instance? T-that, at least, I have safe under my pillow."

Loring smiled. "I have only your purse," he said, "your studs, and a small package which you were careless enough to leave on the table, and which looks as if it might have come from a jeweler."

"It did," said Beckwith; "it's a ring that I got for my wife's birthday. She's coming home t-to-morrow." He smiled slightly as he thought of the solid old family plate and jewels safely locked up in the library below.

"Sorry I can't give it back," said Loring; "but I need the money."

There was a pause. The smoke was floating in misty layers above and around them. Loring looked curiously around the room, which was not much larger than a ship's cabin, and furnished with the utmost plainness. It was, in fact, the one oasis of simplicity which Beckwith had kept for himself in the desert of crowded ornateness with which his wife had filled their house.

"By the way," said Beckwith suddenly, "how did you get in?"

"Window," answered Loring, nodding toward the end of the room.

"I thought I locked it."

"You did; but the lock doesn't work. You may connect this with the fact that to-morrow you will have no maid to serve your breakfast."

Beckwith raised his eyebrows. "Such an excellent maid, t-too," he murmured regretfully. "I wish you wouldn't interfere with a man's domestic arrangements this way. You don't fully appreciate the difficulty of getting good servants."

The smoke thickened, and Beckwith's silence lengthened into pensiveness.

"Look here, Tom," he said, "I wish you would t-tell me why you're in this. You were not a half-bad chap, you know, and—"

"Suppose I should tell you," said Loring seriously, "that I had a wife, who was starving, and that I came after your money t-night to save her life?"

"Why, I should believe you," said Beckwith.

Loring smiled. "You're such a trusting old chap!" he said. "That's why I can—in a measure—throw myself upon your mercy. You could manage, I suppose, to arouse the neighbors; I wouldn't exactly have the heart to shoot you."

"If you put it that way, Tom," replied Beckwith, "I must t-tell you that I've rung the burglar alarm at the head of my bed, and the police should be here now. I have merely been endeavoring to detain you until their arrival." This with an air of conscious cleverness that looked queerly out of place in conjunction with his usually frank and candid expression.

"Exactly," returned the other, unmoved, "but your burglar alarm doesn't work, either. Don't you give me credit for any foresight at all?"

Beckwith looked resigned and somewhat crestfallen. "In t-that case," he said, "I shall have to buy my wife another ring in the morning. But, anyway, Tommy, you could have got away. I shouldn't have appeared against you."

"I believe you, Beck, of course. But, seriously, you shouldn't go around trusting people the way you do. It's bad policy. Now, that maid of yours, for instance—I dare say you have given her innumerable opportunities of decamping with Mrs. Beckwith's jewels."

"She was such a *good maid*," objected Beckwith plaintively.

"She might have been a *good maid*," answered Loring, "but she certainly wasn't a *good maid*." He blew a small smoke ring through a larger one with the air of a man who has successfully closed an argument.

"I don't know," said Beckwith, thoughtfully, "I believe that it pays to t-trust people in the long run. Human nature

is pretty sure to come back at you with the same treatment that you give it. Now, I t-try all sorts of interesting experiments with my men at the bank. They're all such *good* fellows. Though, after all, I dare say it's purely selfish, because men work better for you if you make friends of them."

"You take an optimistic view," answered Loring, "but don't you think there is such a thing as being too confidential?"

"Oh, surely. Now, of course one wouldn't t-trust a man whom one knew to be a thief, or—oh, I beg pardon, Tommy, I forgot."

"Not at all," said Loring, "it's awfully flattering, I'm sure, to have you forget. Only don't make a mistake, Beck, and think a man's honest when perhaps he's only fooling you. It isn't good for the banking business."

"Tom," Beckwith said suddenly, "I don't know how you got in this, and I don't care; but why don't you get out of it? Drop it all; it can't pay. I'll get you work to do, if money's what you want; perhaps there's a place in the bank, if you'd care to t-take it."

Loring looked at his friend admiringly. "You *are* game," he said, "but I won't take advantage of you like that. Besides, I like the life. It's an art, in a way, and you can follow it with all the whole-souled devotion you would give to any other art. And then, beyond everything, I need excitement—and I get it."

Again there was silence. In the tiny room the shaded lights glimmered through the thick blue haze of smoke, like street-lamps in a London fog. Suddenly on the stillness there came a soft, shrill whistle. Loring rose and strolled over to the window, drawing aside the curtain and peering out with his hand over his eyes.

"What's t-that?" asked Beckwith, startled.

"Probably your maid," answered Loring, "or my maid, rather. She was to let me know when the coast was clear, in case I couldn't get away before she did. She told me that your butler had been watching her pretty closely. He's undoubtedly a good servant. You would better raise his wages."

"I will," said Beckwith, "when he

comes back. I let him go away for t-to-night. Oh, I say, Tommy, did you know that, too? You are a clever chap." He looked at Loring with admiration in his eyes. "But—are you going now? I would like to see you again, Tommy. If your professional duties forbid a call by daylight, perhaps some other night—"

Loring shrugged his shoulders. "Not likely," he said carelessly. "I'm leaving Chicago to-morrow—it's getting too small for me. I'm for New York, with plenty of leisure, and what is more to the point—plenty of cash." He spoke in a rather repressed yet exultant tone, that caused Beckwith to look at him sharply.

"Are you quite sure that you will get safely away?" he asked. "What's to prevent me, for instance, from putting a description of you into the hands of the police, and having the east-bound t-trains watched?"

"Oh, you won't do that, Beck," answered Loring gently. "At least, not when I tell you why I really am here."

"Say on," said Beckwith.

"Well, it's most unprofessional, but I will. You see, I belong to a small and select brotherhood whose object is—to put it with shocking frankness—the acquisition of other people's property. They had designated you as a victim of their rather unkind attention, and somehow, Beck, just for the sake of old times, I didn't want you to lose property, and perhaps life, by us. We are—most of us—rather desperate, and there is such a thing as an over-zealous defense of even one's own possessions. Now, when it comes to shooting—well, I won't dwell on it. It isn't pleasant."

Beckwith moved his shoulders uncomfortably. "Not so very," he assented.

"And so I volunteered to come—told them I knew the house, or the dog, or something. They will think I've failed when I go back with only these. Because, Beck, if some one else had come, you would undoubtedly be parting with the valuables in your little safe downstairs, of which you are thinking at this moment with such flattering and hopeful calmness."

Beckwith leaned forward with a sharp exclamation. "How the devil did you know t-that?" he cried.

"Tricks of the trade," answered Loring, "and I'm sorry, but I'll have to take your purse. I can't go back absolutely empty-handed."

"Take it," said Beckwith excitedly. "T-take my watch, too." He dragged it from beneath the pillow and thrust it into Loring's hands. "Here, t-take everything I've got. It's uncommonly good of you, Tom, t-to spare me as you have. I wouldn't have lost those jewels and that silver for anything I own."

Loring dropped the articles into his capacious pocket. "I must go now," he said.

"I'm awfully obliged t-to you," answered Beckwith, "and you've increased my faith in—"

"Don't talk so loud, please," Loring interrupted, "I'm going to raise the window." He threw up the sash and looked cautiously out before preparing to descend.

"Don't break your neck," said Beckwith, in a loud whisper.

"Good-night, Beck," Loring replied. He paused with one leg thrown over the sill. "You've been very decent about it—quite philosophical, in fact. Sleep well the rest of the night, and—think of me in the morning."

He swung himself free of the window, and in a moment Beckwith heard a soft thud as he dropped like a cat on the turf below.

Beckwith slept late next morning. He awoke to an unaccustomed stillness in the house, and there was no answer to his summoning bell. He had forgotten the absence of his butler. The events of the night came back to him, dim and dream-like, and he realized their truth only when he thrust his hand under the pillow and groped in vain for his watch. Somewhat sleepy and very hungry, he went down to the library, where he was wont to find the



DRAWN BY EGGER BERT SMITH

"If it is all the same to you, we will stay here."

morning paper laid ready to his hand. He opened the door, and paused, staring, upon the threshold. Chairs were pushed about in uncouth disorder; books and magazines, brushed hastily from the table, lay in careless heaps upon the floor; and the little safe, its doors swinging wide, was empty. Beckwith stood and looked, his half-smoked cigarette hanging limply from between his fingers; then he walked slowly into the room and picked up one of the magazines. It had been used to muffle the sound of the blows, and was cut through with jagged holes from the steel chisel. With his fingers he followed mechanically the ragged edges of the mutilation. So, he thought, it was all a ruse; and while Loring had been discussing affairs with him, his friends had been busy on the



DRAWN BY EDGAR BERT SMITH

"He paused, staring, upon the threshold."

floor below. The whistle, undoubtedly, had been a signal of successful departure. As he looked, and realized, a hurt sense of the injustice of it all came over him. If only Loring had not told him that cock and bull story—if only he had not posed as a rescuer and friend!

In his revulsion of feeling, the world for the moment seemed destitute of truth, and his faith in human nature slipped gently and imperceptibly away, as light snow slides from a steep roof. He turned, finally, at the sound of a step behind him, and checked with a look his butler's horrified exclamation.

"Clear this up," he said, shortly, and waved an indicating cigarette. "No—first telephone the police. Tell them to look for a tall man with a jaw. I don't care about the others."

"Did—did you see them, sir?" ventured the man.

"And tell them," went on Beckwith, ignoring the question, "to watch the west-bound t-trains. He said he was going east."

Personal Pages by the Publishers

This March number of THE RED BOOK is presented to the rapidly-growing circle of readers with the confidence of the Publishers that its artistic and literary merit, its novelties, its features and its beauty will justify the attention of the most critical observer. From cover to cover it is full of wholesome entertainment, the standards of selection applied to the choice of matter becoming more exacting with every issue.

As was announced a month ago, this number of THE RED BOOK features the Parisian in picture and story. It has been specially calculated to please readers who appreciate the brighter side of life. This is not limited to what we call humor, but includes as well the liveliness and spirit which characterize the most entertaining phases of literature and art. It is not strange that with this plan in view, the number becomes distinctly Parisian in form, for Parisian has come to be synonymous with brightness and gaiety.

The cover of the magazine, reproduced from a painting by Gustavus C. Widney, is a picture which carries the sparkle of the boulevards of the French capital, and is a fetching introduction to what follows. Reutlinger, the most famous photographer of women in France, placed his collection of photographs at the command of THE RED BOOK representative in Paris, and the result appears in the series of eighteen photographic art studies, which we think will be recognized as one of the noteworthy pictorial features of the year in magazine publication. Clever fiction, charmingly illustrated, follows for one hundred and twenty pages, the first story being as typically Parisian as the cover itself.

We have gone thus into detail about the magazine which the reader has in hand, because it is to be taken as an earnest of THE RED BOOK policy in certain directions. We expect to make a novelty feature of general interest at frequent intervals by issuing special numbers of THE RED BOOK which will typify and interpret the various countries in similar fashion to what we have done this time for France.

At the time of writing, it is planned that the May RED BOOK shall be given a Ger-

man inclination in its cover, its pictorial supplement, and its fiction, and unless the promises made by Atlantic cable from Berlin fail of fulfillment, we shall offer a selection of eighteen or more portrait poses of the most beautiful women of Germany, prepared for this purpose in the most famous studios. A cover in harmony with this feature, and a clever story with a German setting, will emphasize the character of the number.

Manifestly the field is an ample one, and one which will be fruitful of pictorial and literary excellence. There is not a country that cannot contribute such material, and the resulting collection will have a genuine artistic value. However, THE RED BOOK is primarily American, and at no time will these features dominate sufficiently to change it from what it has come to be—a high-class magazine for critical readers who want the best there is in American fiction and art.

The April RED BOOK will be a specially strong one in its fiction and illustration. The cover design is reproduced from a painting of charming beauty, and the pictorial supplement of photographic art has been expanded from eighteen to twenty-four pictures of beautiful American women from the studio of Sarony.

Henry Burnham Boone has written for THE RED BOOK a story entitled "The Woof of Success," in which he considers from a new view-point the question of international marriages. The scene is Florence, but the characters are the American and English visitors who dwell there for the season, and the *dénouement* is truly American. The story has been illustrated by John Clitheroe Gilbert, with pictures that interpret excellently the life described by the author.

"More than an Adventure" is the name of a clever story with a startling conclusion, written for THE RED BOOK by James Barr, brother of Robert Barr. The fame of the younger writer is rising rapidly, and this story is sure to win favor for him. It relates the peculiar experiences that befell the narrator in a camp in the north woods, where the monotony of fishing and shooting was varied with kidnapping and a very amusing love affair. The pictures are by William Schmedtgen,

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who is peculiarly happy when illustrating life out of doors.

"The Spoil of the Egyptian" is a western story of genuine novelty by Charles Matthias. If rogues in real life were as fascinating as those who have been contributed to the pages of THE RED BOOK by Rex E. Beach, Harry Irving Greene, and, now, by Mr. Matthias, no one would have the heart to punish them for their peccadilloes. In this story of a mining-camp, a safe-robbery, and the ultimate mulcting of an express company, by methods truly devious, the writer has proved his ingenuity and his right to a welcome from RED Book readers. Illustrations by W. J. Enright accompany the story.

William Hamilton Osborne, whose name gains fame rapidly, and who has been a frequent contributor to THE RED BOOK since the first number of this magazine, has written another of his business stories under the name, "The Green Store Guaranty." It discusses a condition which will be appreciated by every one who has ever been disappointed in the wearing qualities of a new suit, and may therefore be said to possess what the press agents of melodrama call true and universal heart interest. Mr. Osborne has a neat sense of humor, and this story exemplifies it at its best.

"In Honor of Mr. Gibbs" is the name of a clever little story by Izola L. Merrifield. It relates the experience of a city man who accepts a week-end invitation to a near-by island resort, and finds certain difficulties in the way before he

reaches his destination. Dan Sayre Groesbeck furnishes the illustrations.

Anne Warner, author of "Susan Clegg and Her Friend Mrs. Lathrop," a favored and frequent contributor to THE RED BOOK, writes one of her very lightest love stories, under the title, "Their Hopeless Infatuation." She is one of the most versatile of writers now working in American short fiction, and THE RED BOOK always presents the best examples of her work.

"Her Birthright" is a story with an idea in it, presented by a new writer, Ada V. Stockton. It is the sort of tale which will bear analysis and stimulate conversation, which is more than can be said of all short stories. The problem involved and the lesson learned as a result of a mistaken solution, entitle the story to be called truly original.

"Journey's End," the newest story by Catherine Carr, is likewise a love story that ends properly, not too heavy for easy reading, but clever in the telling and amusing in the situations involved.

To these stories that have been named and outlined in brief, others might be added, by such authors as Frank H. Gassaway, Una Hudson, C. M. Keys, Minnie J. Reynolds, Leo Crane, Edith Dunton and others no less popular among the readers of fiction. With artistic illustrations, an elaborate pictorial art supplement in sepia double-tone, and an artistic cover to enclose the whole, the April RED BOOK becomes a number of which the Publishers feel they may be justly proud, and for which they expect a hearty welcome from the reading public.